

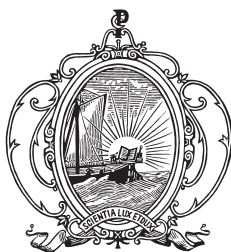
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### Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1500 BC)

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GIANLUCA MINIACI, MARILINA BETRÒ and STEPHEN QUIRKE



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## MIDDLE KINGDOM CLAPPERS, DANCERS, BIRTH MAGIC, AND THE REINVENTION OF RITUAL

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**Abstract.** This essay examines the archaeological contexts of late Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom hand-shaped clappers and argues three main points. First, the sites with the greatest concentration of clappers were those located near mortuary temples. Given that clappers were frequently found with female figurines and mirrors, they may have been utilized in mortuary temples by Hathoric performers who danced for the dead king as Re. Second, clappers were an integral part of birth magic and are frequently found in the company of two and three dimensional male and female lion-headed daemons and other protectors (*s3w*) of the sun god and of those about to be born or reborn. Finally, it is argued that, like many Middle Kingdom grave goods, clappers had been ‘rediscovered’ and religiously re-envisioned by sacral authorities who encountered Protodynastic and Early Dynastic votive material during temple renovations and perhaps also during work at the pilgrimage site of Umm el-Qa’ab.

Beginning in the Second Intermediate Period, many hand-shaped clappers bear the serene visage of the goddess Hathor on their sleeve, thereby dispelling any mystery as to their ritual affiliation. Fashioned of wood or, more often, of halved hippo tusks, clappers from the Second Intermediate Period and New Kingdom have been recovered from tombs, at least two temples, and assorted other –often secondary– contexts at sites inside Egypt<sup>1</sup> and at a handful of sites in Syria-Palestine (such as Ugarit<sup>2</sup> and Beth Shan<sup>3</sup>) and Nubia (at Kerma<sup>4</sup> and Semna,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sites at which Second Intermediate Period and New Kingdom clappers have been excavated include Gurob, Abydos, Saqqara, Rifeh, Gerzeh, Gebel Zeit, Sawama, Deir el-Ballas, Amarna, Hiw, and the Theban region.

<sup>2</sup> The clapper (RS24.421) was discovered in the so-called House of the Magician-Priest. See GACHET-BIZOLLON, *Les ivoires d’Ougarit*, cat. 392.

<sup>3</sup> The clapper came from the courtyard of the Nineteenth Dynasty temple at the Egyptian base. JAMES, MCGOVERN, *The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison*, vol. II, fig. 105.1. Clappers were also found in a temple context within Egypt at the Hathor shrine of Gebel Zeit. See PINCH, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 74.

<sup>4</sup> The Hathor-headed ebony clapper was discovered with the body of a retainer associated with royal tumulus X. See REISNER, *Excavations at Kerma*, 261, pl. 52.

<sup>5</sup> MFA 29.1188. See FREED, *Egypt’s Golden Age*, 262, cat. 369.

for example). Such clappers were on occasion inscribed on behalf of their owners, individuals who were invariably female. Women that possessed such instruments might be royalty<sup>6</sup> or, in one case, the maidservant of a female ruler (*ḥk3t*).<sup>7</sup> Otherwise, clappers belonged to singers and devotees of Hathor Mistress of the West,<sup>8</sup> Hathor of Heliopolis,<sup>9</sup> Amun,<sup>10</sup> and Mut Lady of Isheru.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, the latter two clappers, although dedicated to Theban deities, bore images of Hathor – her head surmounted by uraei and, in the latter case, also an enshrined uraeus flanked by four felines. These ‘Theban’ clappers, then, almost assuredly equated Mut with the Eye of the Sun, a known avatar of this goddess and also of Hathor of Heliopolis. The solar Eye Goddess was the daughter-consort of the sun and in her form of Hathor an apt choice to grace a clapper. Hathor, after all, functioned both as the divine patron of music and as the ‘hand of Atum’, the sun god’s partner in his original masturbatory act of creation.<sup>12</sup>

The meaning (or meanings) of hand-shaped clappers prior to the Second Intermediate period, however, is much less clear. Instruments that unambiguously belong to this category first appear in the archaeological record during the Sixth Dynasty, and from this time throughout most or all of the Thirteenth Dynasty the instruments are completely devoid of inscriptions. Figs. 1-7 illustrate excavated clappers from this period and some of the more charged grave goods that accompanied them. In addition to the hand-shaped clappers, two other clapper designs merit consideration due to their patently symbolic shape. The cow or calf-headed clappers discovered at Kahun and depicted in Fig. 2-row 3, for instance, almost certainly referenced Hathor, but no provenienced parallels exist.<sup>13</sup> Concepts surrounding renewal and rebirth, on the other hand, were no doubt inherent in the design of the two pairs of lotiform clappers found in tombs at Abydos and Lisht North<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 1-row 1 and Fig. 7-row 1). The vast majority of excavated clappers from this period, however, consisted simply of stylized forearms that might be straight or arced to varying degrees. All were carved with bracelets, though these

<sup>6</sup> A pair of clappers found in Tutankhamun’s tomb belonged to Tiye and Meritaten (CG 69455; HICKMANN, *Instruments de musique*, pl. 12b). See also the clappers inscribed for a king’s daughter excavated at Deir el-Medina (CG 69247; *op. cit.*, 22, pl. 8B).

<sup>7</sup> This Second Intermediate Period pair of clappers was found at Hiw in tomb Y196 (BM EA 30866 and Oriental Institute E 5518; see PETRIE, *Diospolis Parva*, pl. 27).

<sup>8</sup> BM EA 22757, said to be from Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. See ANDERSON, *Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities*, vol. III, 21, fig. 31.

<sup>9</sup> MMA 1970.50, unprovenienced.

<sup>10</sup> Louvre N.1475, unprovenienced. See ZIEGLER, *Catalogue des instruments de musique égyptiens*, 28-9.

<sup>11</sup> MMA 26.7.1449, unprovenienced.

<sup>12</sup> See the general summaries of clapper function and iconography in ZIEGLER, *Catalogue des instruments de musique égyptiens*, 21-2, CAPEL, in CAPEL, MARKOE (eds.), *Mistress of the House*, 101-2, and STÜNKEL, in OPPENHEIM *et al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 105.

<sup>13</sup> Unprovenienced examples include Fitzwilliam Museum E.151a-b1939 and CG 69236.

<sup>14</sup> Lisht North will henceforth be referred to as Lisht. When Lisht South is meant, it will be designated as such.

often differed in design, and the butt ends of most were perforated so that they might be strung together. Some of the arms and hands bore circle-dot drilled decoration, and the nails and knuckles of many had been clearly delineated. Such stylistic details seem to reveal little, however, as clappers of widely divergent style and manufacture were often recovered from a single tomb. Thus these instruments remain enigmatic when viewed strictly on their own terms.

As the physical characteristics of these clappers do little to illuminate their cultural significance, insight into their meaning and function is only accessible by examining their archaeological contexts as well as the nature of their depictions in funerary art. Clappers of any date are most often discussed with scant attention paid to their archaeological context. Yet, as this article will seek to demonstrate, late Old Kingdom to late Middle Kingdom clappers are frequently found alongside nude female figurines, frightening and compelling masked figures, snake-grasping *Mischwesen*, and indeed a whole host of images that drew upon Hathoric and solar mythology, as well as the power of the deep primordial past, to gain their potency. It is ironic, then, that just at the point at which hand-shaped clappers began to deploy explicit Hathoric iconography and inscriptions in the Second Intermediate Period, the thematic coherency in their archaeological assemblages plummeted.<sup>15</sup>

In order to investigate the archaeological and iconographic company that Middle Kingdom clappers kept, this essay will focus only upon those clappers discovered in relatively closed contexts together with other artifacts. Thus archaeologically attested clappers are ignored if they were the only object recorded from their context or if the context was disturbed enough that it did not possess discernable boundaries.<sup>16</sup> After a brief admission of the caveats that must preface such a study and a discussion of the general nature of the findings, I will focus on two categories of artifacts that were discovered in association with clappers relatively frequently and which seemed to be especially imbued with social meaning. These consist primarily of mirrors and representations of female dancers, on the one hand, and amuletic wands as well as images in two and

<sup>15</sup> The author's examination of the archaeological contexts of close to fifty clappers from this period produced no ritually significant patterning.

<sup>16</sup> The ivory clapper found in the pomerium at Askut in loose association with terracotta crocodile figurines, sherds depicting hands holding breasts, and human hair was thus regrettably left out of consideration (see BADAWY, *Archaeology* 18/2, 127, 130). The group burials in the sprawling Birabi tomb C 37 represented a similarly intriguing context, though the great number of burials, the fact that the material within ranged from Middle Kingdom to New Kingdom in date, the lack of drawings or photographs of the clappers, and the confused state of deposition (see CARNARVON, CARTER, *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes*, 87) led to my decision to omit the clappers found within from consideration. I have allowed myself three exceptions to my exclusion of extremely confusing or unbounded contexts. The clappers found by Josef Wegner at Wahsut in Abydos come from two types of contexts—household and cultic—that are particularly important as they are poorly represented in the archaeological record. For the rationale behind including material from Asasif 6A, debris East of Pabasa, see the caption to Fig. 3-row 1.

three dimensions of 'Aha-Bes', 'Beset', and of a variety of protective forces and animals, on the other. I will end by connecting many of these objects, as well as clappers, back to a primordial past that had been rediscovered as pharaohs of the late Old and Middle Kingdoms once again focused attention and resources on provincial shrines. By exhuming religious relics that had been obscured from view for the better part of a millennium, the Egyptians came face-to-face with entities and implements that hailed from a vertiginous past. By virtue of their almost unfathomable age, as well as the deeply sacred character of their find spots, these objects must have demanded to be resuscitated. Their resuscitation, however, I would argue, both necessitated and inspired a new and creative 'reinvention' of ritual.

The objects that play a part in these discussions are illustrated together with their associated clappers in Figs. 1-7. Information regarding their materials, dimensions, museum numbers, and excavation reports are provided in the captions to these figures. For the sake of completeness, clappers found alongside artifact assemblages that *didn't* include any of these categories of objects are illustrated as well. Clappers from 16 of the 43 contexts included within Figs. 1-7 fell into this category, though it should be stated that in four of the sixteen cases only a single object complimented its clapper (a scarab in Harageh 37, a tweezer in Dendera 8:112, a pair of alabaster inlaid eyes in Abydos 471.A.08, and another clapper in Abydos E 356). Thus the pattern of association would perhaps be even more robust than it already appears were it not for the activities of plunderers and of archaeological expeditions that neglected to comprehensively document their work.

#### SOME CAVEATS AND BASIC INFORMATION CONCERNING LATE OLD KINGDOM AND MIDDLE KINGDOM CLAPPERS

Before embarking on a study that primarily concerns artifact assemblages discovered in Middle Kingdom tombs, it is important to note that the contexts that will be discussed have almost all been plundered, that the vast majority of tombs originally housed multiple burials, and that in all but three cases no plan exists that details both the architecture and the distribution of finds.<sup>17</sup> In the vast majority of cases, one is confronted simply with a tomb number and a list of what was discovered within the tomb. Such lists are especially unfortunate if unaccompanied by descriptions or images, as clappers were often referred to 'spatulae' or as 'wands'. I have therefore left items that could not be verified as clappers out of consideration.

<sup>17</sup> The published exceptions are Mostagedda 10008 and Mirgissa X:100.

Clappers could only be assigned to a specific owner in two instances. In Mostagedda tomb 10008, Guy Brunton excavated a clapper that had been stored in a box at the feet of a skeleton he identified as female, based on physical traits and also, presumably, the strongly feminine character of her amulets (the plan is reproduced in Fig. 1-row 1).<sup>18</sup> Likewise, in 2012 the Institute of Fine Arts Excavations at Abydos discovered a mismatched pair of clappers in the plain coffin burial of an adolescent girl (Operation 164, Locus 37; Fig. 1-row 2). This twelve or thirteen year-old wore braided hair extensions, a beaded headdress (bearing diamond designs similar to the tattoos discovered on dancers), and took with her to the grave items that included two small feldspar fish amulets, a scarab that dated to the Thirteenth Dynasty, and a set of cosmetic vessels.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, such clarity in the archaeological record is the exception, and attempts to discern broad patterns of ownership met with little success. Skeletons were only sexed at Lisht, Harageh, and Mostagedda, and the veracity of such determinations by early archaeologists is notoriously questionable. Even if all assessments were consistent and/or valid, however, no clear patterning emerges. Most tombs contained skeletons that had been assigned to both sexes.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, clappers were discovered in tombs that contained artifacts linked to women,<sup>21</sup> those linked to men,<sup>22</sup> and a majority that were either mixed or gender neutral and thus indicative only of their time.

It is possible that this seeming lack of sexual patterning may reflect reality. When one takes iconographic evidence of clapper use in ancient Egypt into account, it becomes clear that males, females, and divine entities all employed hand-shaped instruments as clappers or batons. Certainly, in the context of Mereruka's tomb reliefs (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9-row 1) both males and females wielded virtually identical hand-shaped implements, a circumstance that also held true for other types of clappers depicted in Old Kingdom art.<sup>23</sup> Counter-intuitively, hand-shaped clappers disappear in Middle Kingdom art, precisely

<sup>18</sup> BRUNTON, *Mostagedda*, 99. This burial is discussed at length in the subsequent section.

<sup>19</sup> Personal comm. Matthew D. Adams. This burial is as yet unpublished.

<sup>20</sup> The information from Mostagedda came from BRUNTON, *Mostagedda*; for Harageh, see ENGELBACH, *Harageh*. Information here and elsewhere concerning excavated material from Lisht North and Asasif, unless otherwise noted, comes from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Egyptian Art Archives.

<sup>21</sup> Artifacts linked to women, such as hair extensions, were frequently found. In no instances, however, could it be securely stated that a burial had belonged to females exclusively.

<sup>22</sup> Tombs containing statuettes of men, objects bearing titles, or other typically masculine artifacts include Lisht 466, Lisht 468, Lisht 513, Lisht 885, Harageh 37, and Abydos 498.A.08, but the presence of such material in no way precluded the burial of associated females as well. For Abydos 498.A.08, see SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages*, vol. I, 262. For Harageh, see ENGELBACH, *Harageh*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, the discussion of 'boomerang' and 'baton' dances in KINNEY, *Dance*, 91-100.



as they first begin to appear in significant numbers in the archaeological record. Indeed, the fact that they are never again depicted in scenes of dance, suggests either a change in decorum or perhaps a shift in function. By contrast, the most visible types of clapper found in Middle Kingdom art – namely, those decorated with wedge-shaped or human-headed finials and depicted grasped in the hands of male Hathoric Ihy-priests – are only rarely discovered in contemporary tombs.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, then, the sexual politics of late Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom hand-shaped clappers remain largely illegible.

The other variable of interest, if it were indeed possible to ascertain individual ownership of clappers, would be age and perhaps also physical stature. In the scenes depicted in the tomb of Mereruka (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9-row 1) and possibly also in British Museum relief 994 (Fig. 9-row 2), the individuals who hold the clappers are adolescents. A tradition linking girls with clappers may have survived (or been revived) in the New Kingdom, when young females dancing and playing clappers are depicted in the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Paheri and in a Nineteenth Dynasty relief from Saqqara.<sup>25</sup> While the association is indeed affirmed in the newly discovered burial at Abydos, discussed above, the situation is less clear elsewhere. Although clappers were found in tombs with the skeletal remains of children (Lisht 466, Lisht 555, and Mostagedda 10008), adults shared the same contexts. Further, in Mostagedda 10008, the clapper was unambiguously associated with an adult burial (Fig. 1-row 1). In Old Kingdom tomb reliefs, hand-shaped implements that resemble clappers – but which, based on their contexts, are probably better classified as batons – are occasionally depicted in the grasp of dwarfs serving as animal tenders (Fig. 9-row 4g).<sup>26</sup> Although the skeletal remains of dwarfs have never been documented in association with such implements, figurines of dwarfs did share space with hand-shaped clappers in five of the tombs under consideration (Ramesseum 5, Abydos G62, Harageh A37, Lisht 884, Lisht 885) – an association that will be revisited.

While it must be admitted that in the vast majority of cases individuals cannot be linked to clappers, the situation is far from hopeless. The artifact assemblages vary significantly from tomb to tomb in a given cemetery as well as between cemeteries. In all likelihood tombs belonged to specific families

<sup>24</sup> For representations of clappers wielded by Ihy-priests, see DAVIES, *The Tomb of Antefoker*, pl. 23; BLACKMAN, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, vol. I, pl. 2; *op. cit.*, vol. II, pl. 15. Wedge-shaped clappers have been found at Lisht together with boomerang type clappers in a deposit south of the so-called ‘faience factory’ (MMA 22.1.672a, b), but to my knowledge no Middle Kingdom human-headed clappers have been discovered in excavations. Boomerang-type clappers are also rare and often difficult to distinguish from throwsticks in publications. One pair (MMA 31.3.32) seems to have been interred in Asasif tomb 812.

<sup>25</sup> In neither case were the clappers hand-shaped. For the tomb of Paheri, see TYLOR, *The Tomb of Paheri*, pl. 7. The Saqqara relief (JdE 4972) can be found in LEXOŮÁ, *Ancient Egyptian Dances*, fig. 57.

<sup>26</sup> This genre of scene is discussed in SOURDIVE, *La main dans l’Égypte pharaonique*, 28–36, 94–8 and below.

and—given that the special varieties of grave goods that are discussed here are not routinely reduplicated—uninscribed objects may have been believed to be efficacious for all. Thus, just as the ‘Aha-Bes’ and dwarf figurines that Arthur Mace discovered on household altars at Lisht in the Second Intermediate Period<sup>27</sup> presumably acted to protect the family that resided in the house, so the analogous special items found together with clappers might have been thought to protect the family that resided in the tomb. Indeed, given the widely acknowledged and oft-discussed overlap between the spheres of the living and the dead in terms of artifacts related to birth magic, this analogy between a family’s house and their house-of-eternity may be especially apt.<sup>28</sup> Thus, for the purposes of this article, assembled grave goods will be viewed as belonging to the corporate family unit and deemed fit for comparison to other roughly contemporary assemblages.<sup>29</sup> While this is obviously not an ideal situation, the alternative—to throw up one’s hands in despair when greeted by the type of funerary context typical of the Middle Kingdom—seems unduly defeatist.

In the discussions that follow, the relationship between different categories of objects and clappers will be of foremost interest, but the strong spatial patterning in the distribution of clappers should be highlighted from the start. As the data showcased in Figs. 1-7 illustrate, provenienced early clappers have been found in large numbers at only four sites: Abydos, Lisht, Harageh, and Thebes (namely at Asasif and the Ramesseum). Other cemeteries, although extensively excavated, produced no clappers or only a couple (*i.e.*, Dendera, Kahun, Mostagedda, Sheikh Farag, Mirgissa, and Kuban). If one includes sites at which clappers were discovered in contexts either without other grave goods or without any reported—therefore falling outside the purview of this study—the repertoire expands, but only slightly (adding Giza<sup>30</sup> and Kubaniyeh<sup>31</sup>).

<sup>27</sup> MACE, *BMMA* 16/11, 6, fig. 3; 12.

<sup>28</sup> The overlapping domestic and mortuary associations of objects related to birth (and therefore rebirth) have been recently discussed by WEGNER, in SILVERMAN, SIMPSON, WEGNER. (eds.), *Archaeism and Innovation*, 447-96. While some mixing may have taken place between household and mortuary contexts at Lisht (STÜNKEL, in OPPENHEIM *et al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 105), the similarity in assemblages between this site and others of late Middle Kingdom date suggests that mixing need not be postulated to explain why some of the special items found in houses and tombs resembled one another.

<sup>29</sup> Janet Richards takes a similar approach in her study of Middle Kingdom burials, stating “[...] *these graves are held to represent the investment of a group of individuals, probably to be viewed as family groups. Thus in considering the level of access to resources by kin or corporate groups, we can evaluate the relative positions of families as opposed to individuals*” (RICHARDS, *Society and Death*, 106).

<sup>30</sup> Selim Hassan discovered two pairs of clappers, one in a courtyard and the other with a skeleton (HASSAN, *Excavations at Giza*, 89-90, 93, pls. 28, 45). W. M. F. Petrie also found at least two pairs of clappers at Giza (all four are numbered UC 27468), though nothing is known of their context (personal comm. Alice Stevenson).

<sup>31</sup> Kubaniyeh grave 23.t.6 (Kunsthistorische Museum 7236; JUNKER, *Bericht über die Grabungen*, 204).

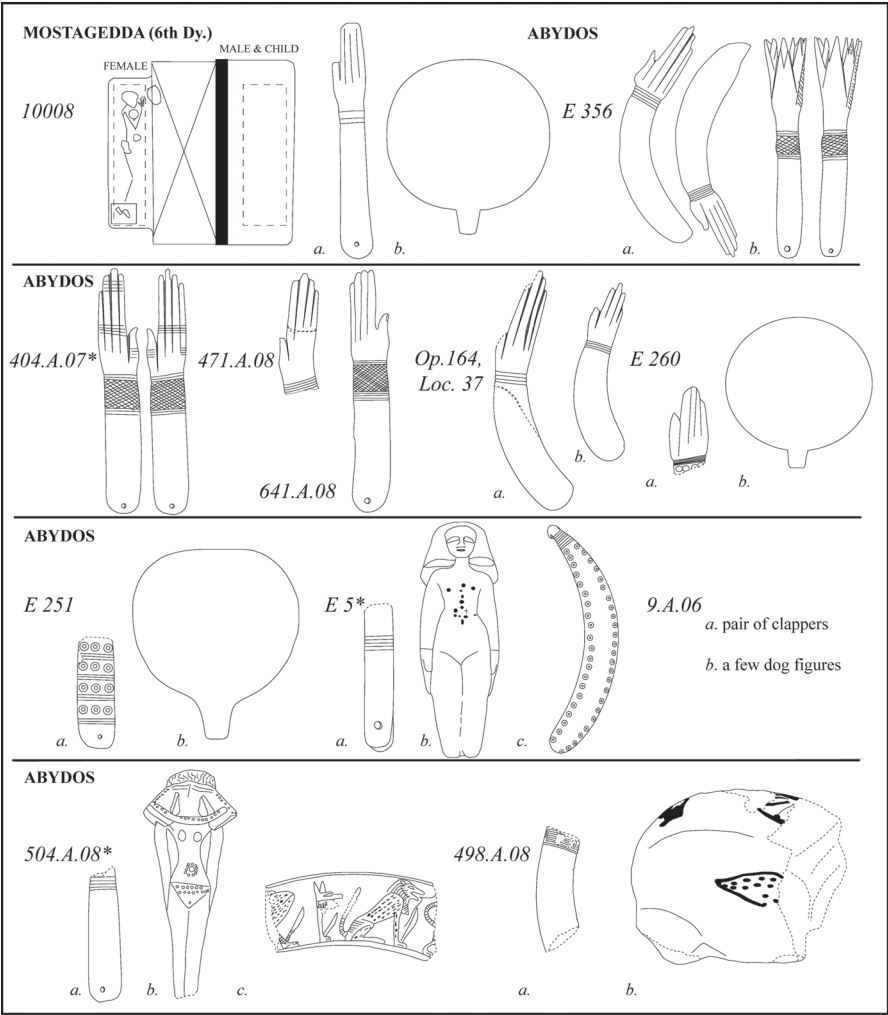


Fig. 1 – Archaeologically attested clappers and associated grave goods\*

**Mostagedda 10008:** plan of the burial (redrawn from BRUNTON, *Mostagedda*, pl. 64); a. ivory, h. 11.4 cm (BM EA 63114; after ANDERSON, *Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities*, 10, fig. 13); b. copper mirror, no meas. (redrawn from BRUNTON, *op. cit.*, pl. 64);

**Abydos E 356:** a. ivory, h. 20.9 cm (CG 69249; after HICKMANN, *Instruments de musique*, pl. 13B); b. ivory, h. 14.8 cm (CG 69643; after HICKMANN, *op. cit.*, pl. 9A);

**Abydos 404.A.07:** ivory, max. h. 16.5 cm (JdE 45364; after HICKMANN, *op. cit.*, pl. 10);

**Abydos 471.A.08:** ivory, h. 9.5 cm (Liv.E.7031; after a photo provided by the Garstang Museum);

**Abydos 641.A.08:** ivory, h. 19 cm (redrawn from SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages*, vol. II, 538);

**Abydos Operation 164, locus 37:** a. ivory, h. 23 cm (ANC 39587; after a photo provided by Matthew D. Adams); b. ivory, h. 17.5 cm (ANC39586; after a photo provided by Matthew D. Adams); a. & b. are scaled appropriately with respect to one another;

**Abydos E 260:** a. ivory, no meas. (after GARSTANG, *Arábah*, pl. 14); b. copper mirror, no meas. (redrawn from GARSTANG, *op. cit.*, pl. 16);

**Abydos E 251:** a. ivory, h. 8.5 cm (Fitzwilliam E.241.1900; after GARSTANG, *op. cit.*, pl. 14); b. copper mirror, no meas. (redrawn from GARSTANG, *op. cit.*, pl. 16);

**Abydos E 5:** a. ivory, no meas. (after GARSTANG, *op. cit.*, pl. 14) b. limestone figurine, h. 15 cm (Penn E6709; after OD); c. ivory wand, h. 15.7 cm (Penn E6710; after a photo provided by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology);

**Abydos 9.A.06:** a. ivory, no meas.; b. faience dog ‘amulets’, no meas. (recorded in SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages*, vol. I, 191);

**Abydos 504.A.08:** a. ivory, h. 13 cm (Liv.E.7025); b. clay figurine, h. 12.7 cm (Liv.E.6895); c. ivory wand, l. 8.2 cm (Liv.E.7025) (a.-c. after archival photos from the Garstang Museum);

**Abydos 498.A.08:** a. ivory, h. 8.5 cm (Liv.E.8149); b. faience hippo, l. 5.4 cm (Liv.E.128) (a.-b. after photos provided by the Garstang Museum)

\*These drawings are intended to reproduce the most recognizable aspects of the artifacts. Because of their scale, damage has generally been shown only when it affects design or structure. In some cases, especially with regard to grainy photographs from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries BC, the drawings are only as good as the available photograph. Although artifacts are grouped according to site, the order presented in the figures is determined more by compositional and contextual concerns than numeric ordering. An asterisk indicates that the tomb included a mixed assemblage of Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period artifacts. The abbreviation “OD” is employed for objects drawn after photographs accessed from a museum’s online database.

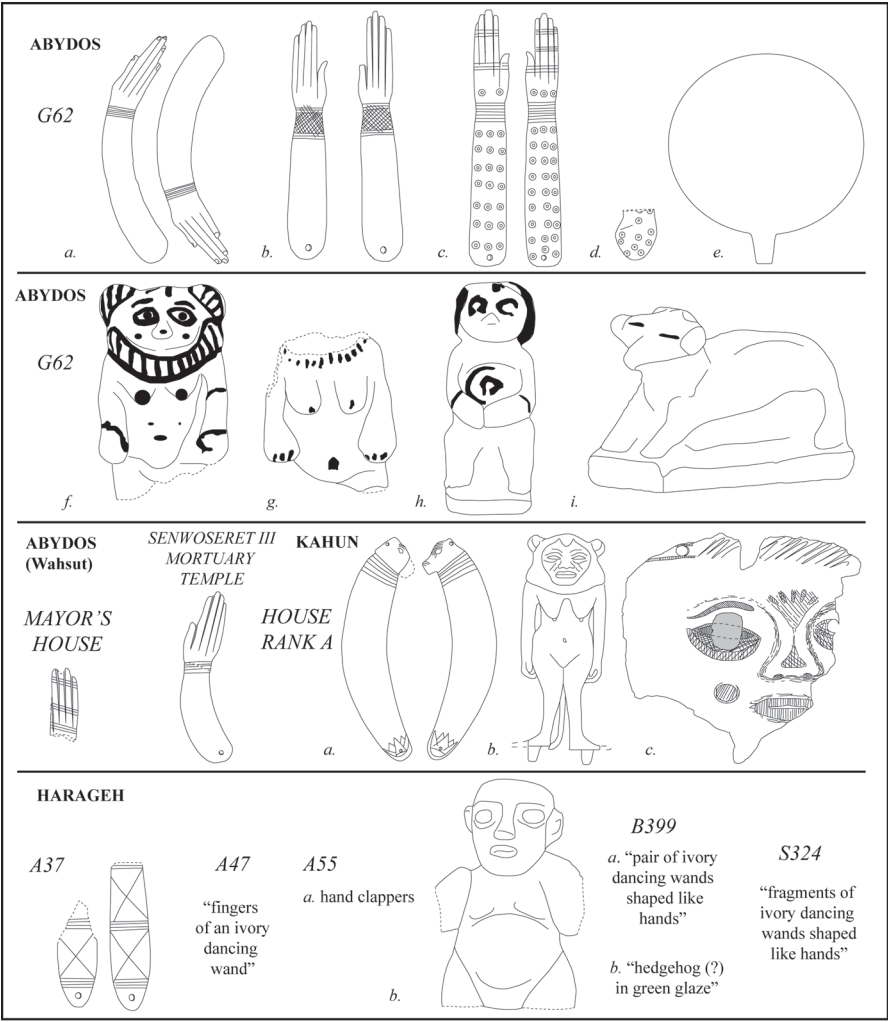


Fig. 2 – Archaeologically attested clappers and associated grave goods

**Abydos G62:** a. ivory, max. h. 19.1 cm (BM EA 37301; after ANDERSON, *Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities*, 11, fig. 14); b. ivory, max. h. 15.3 cm (BM EA 37303; after ANDERSON, *op. cit.*, 12, fig. 16); c. ivory, max. h. 17.3 cm (BM EA 37302; after ANDERSON, *op. cit.*, 11, fig. 15); d. ivory clapper (?) handle, l. 4.2 cm (BM EA 37304); e. bronze (?) mirror, l. 13.9 (BM EA 37307); f. faience ‘Aha-Bes’ figurine, h. 8.4 cm (BM EA 37297); g. faience ‘Ipy-Taweret’ figurine, h. 5.8 cm (BM EA 37296); h. faience dwarf, h. 5.7 cm (BM EA 37298); i. faience running goat, l. 4.86 cm (BM EA 37299) (d.-i. after photos provided by Gianluca Miniaci);

**Wahsut (Abydos) Mayor’s house:** ivory, h. 5.3 cm (after a photo provided by Josef Wegner);

**Wahsut (Abydos) Senwoseret III temple:** ivory, h. 10 cm. (after a photo provided by Josef Wegner);

**Kahun house in rank A:** a. ivory, max. h. 18.4 cm (Manchester 124); b. wood ‘Beset’ figurine, no meas.; c. linen & gesso mask, no meas. (Manchester 123) (a.-c. redrawn from PETRIE, *Kahun*, pl. 8);

**Harageh A37:** ivory, max. h. 10.4 cm (UC 6507; after OD);

**Harageh A47:** ivory, no meas. (recorded in ENGELBACH, *Harageh*, pl. 58 tomb register);

**Harageh A55:** a. ivory, no meas. (recorded in BOURRIAU, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies*, 18); b. faience dwarf, no meas. (after ENGELBACH, *Harageh*, pl. 14.9);

**Harageh B399:** a. ivory, no meas; b. faience hedgehog (?), no meas. (a.-b. recorded in ENGELBACH, *Harageh*, pl. 61 tomb register);

**Harageh S324:** ivory, no meas. (recorded in ENGELBACH, *op. cit.*, pl. 60 tomb register)

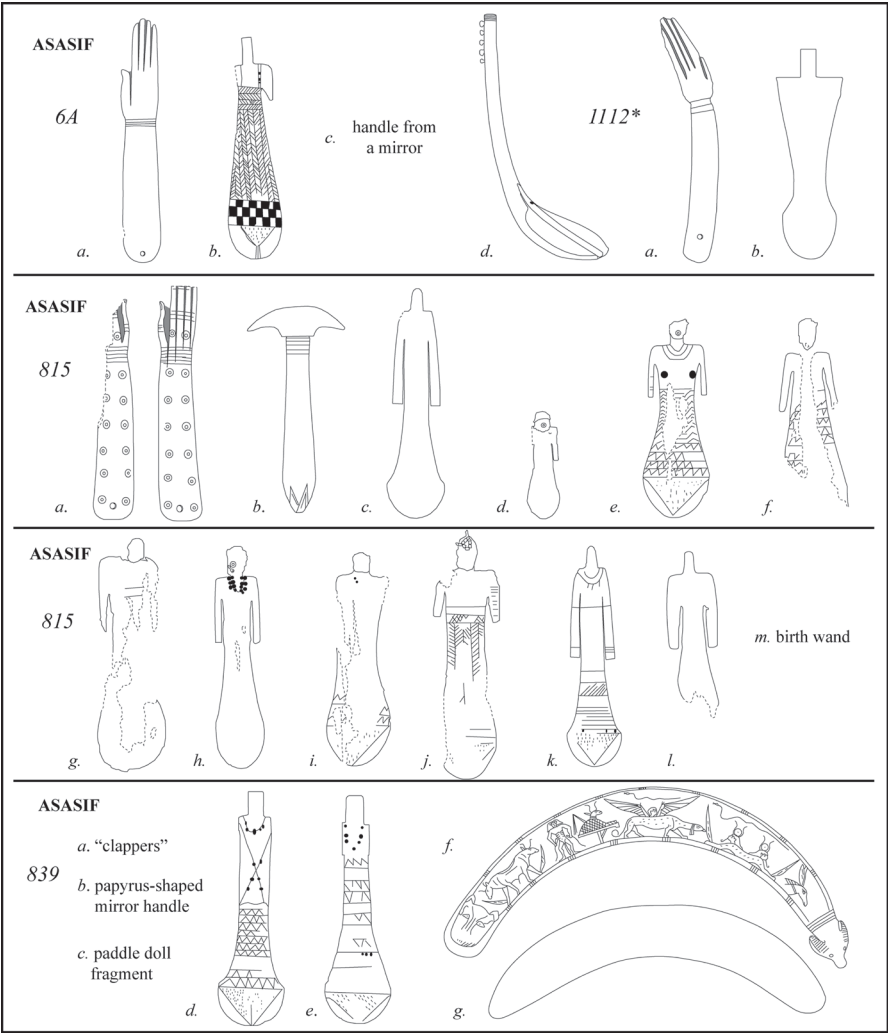


Fig. 3 – Archaeologically attested clappers and associated grave goods

**Asasif 6A, debris East of Pabasa** (note: although this context constituted a secondary deposit of coffins and funerary goods of mixed date, the thematic coherency of the objects listed here and the clustering of their accession numbers between MMA 19.1.13 and 19.1.17 suggests they may have belonged to the same assemblage of grave goods): a. ivory, h. 16.5 cm (MMA 19.3.15; after the MMA accession card photo); b. wood paddle doll, h. 19.4 cm (after the accession card photo for MMA 19.3.13); c. no picture, no meas. (recorded on MMA tomb card); d. wood bow harp, h. 81.4 cm (MMA 19.3.17; after the MMA accession card photo);

**Asasif 1112:** a. wood, h. 26 cm (MMA 22.3.70; after MMA expedition photograph M3C: 320); b. wood paddle doll, h. 20 cm (redrawn from MMA tomb card);

**Asasif 815:** a. ivory, max. h. 16.5 cm (after the accession card photo for MMA 31.3.34a, b); b. wood mirror handle, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph M12C: 271); c. wood paddle doll, h. 19.6 cm (after MMA expedition photograph 12C: 271). Note: a.-c. were found in close association, and e.-l. also were discovered together. All are wood paddle dolls; some were found with heads made of pitch and mud bead wigs. d. is 9.6 cm, while the others varied in height between 18 and 22 cm.; d.-j. are scaled appropriately with respect to one another, as are k. and l. (d.-j. are after MMA expedition photograph M11C: 101. k. and l. are after MMA expedition photograph 12C: 290); m. ivory wand, no meas. (recorded on MMA tomb card);

**Asasif 839:** a. ‘the hand from one (was) made of wood’, no meas.; b. wood mirror handle, no meas.; c. wood paddle doll fragment, h. 9 cm (a.-c. are recorded on MMA tomb card); d. wooden paddle doll, h. 20.2 cm (MMA 31.3.45; after the MMA accession card photo); e. wooden paddle doll, h. 20 cm (after the accession card photo for MMA 31.3.46); f. ivory wand, l. 25 cm (JdE 56273; after MMA expedition photograph M12C: 291); g. uninscribed ivory wand or tusk, l. 22 cm (MMA 31.3.31; after MMA expedition photograph M12C: 291)



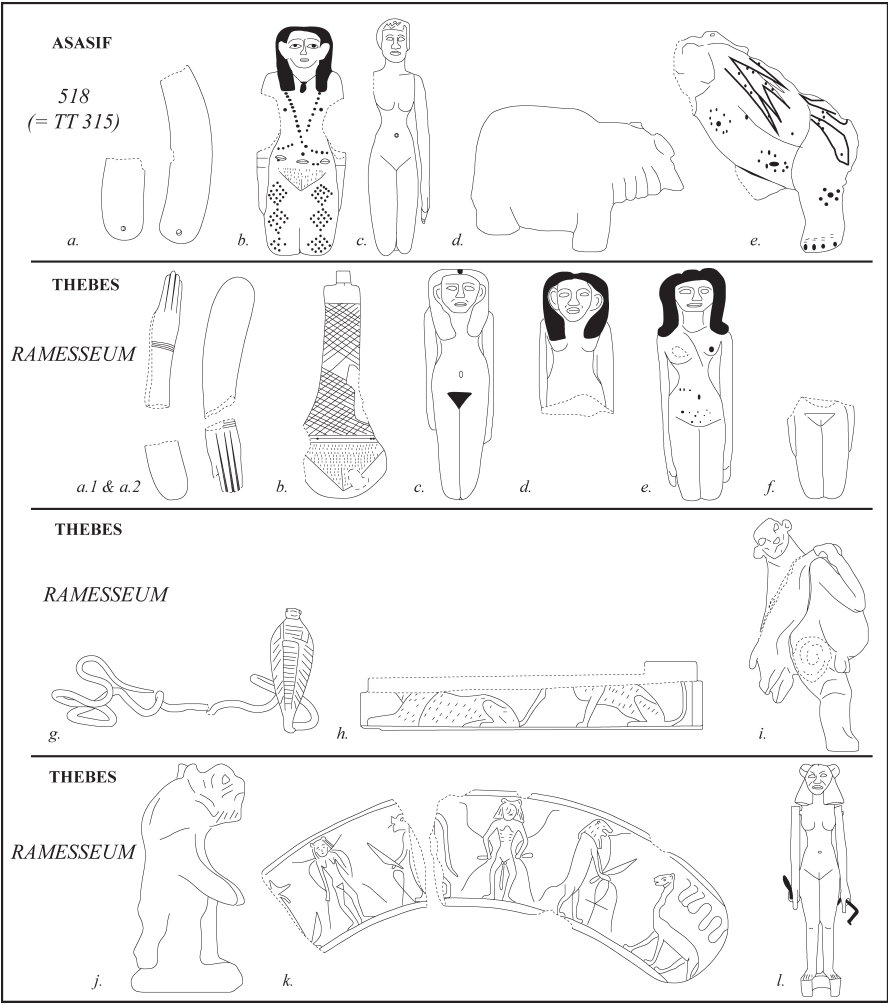


Fig. 4 – Archaeologically attested clappers and associated grave goods

**Asasif 518:** a. ivory, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph M7C: 288); b. faience figurine, h. 13 cm (JdE 47710; after SALEH, SOUROUZIAN, *Egyptian Museum Cairo*, no. 80); c. ebony figurine, h. 11.5 cm (MMA 26.3.307; after MMA expedition photograph M7C: 224); d. wood hippo, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph M7C: 288); e. faience hippo, h. over 16 cm (JdE 47711; after MMA expedition photograph M4C: 218);

**Ramesseum Tomb 5:** a. ivory, max h. 14.7 cm (a.1 Manchester 1797; a.2 Manchester 1796; both after OD); b. wood paddle doll, h. 18.9 cm (Manchester 1832); c. limestone figurine, h. 10.3 cm (Manchester 1789); d. limestone figurine, h. 7.4 cm. (Manchester 1794); e. faience figurine, h. 11.3 cm (Manchester 1787); f. limestone figurine, h. 6.5 cm. (Manchester 1788); g. bronze snake, max. l. 28 cm (Fitzwilliam E.63.1896); h. ivory magic rod, l. 12 cm (Manchester 1795); i. ivory dwarf (?), h. 7.7 cm (Penn E13405; after QUIBELL, *The Ramesseum*, pl. 2.2); j. faience lion, h. 3.1 cm (Manchester 1839); k. ivory wand, l. 11 cm (Manchester 1799); l. wood 'Beset', h. 20.2 cm (Manchester 1790) (all objects except for 'i' were drawn after images archived in the British Museum website <[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online\\_research\\_catalogues/rp/the\\_ramesseum\\_papyri/the\\_archaeological\\_context/the\\_objects.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online_research_catalogues/rp/the_ramesseum_papyri/the_archaeological_context/the_objects.aspx)>, accessed 02.05.2015)

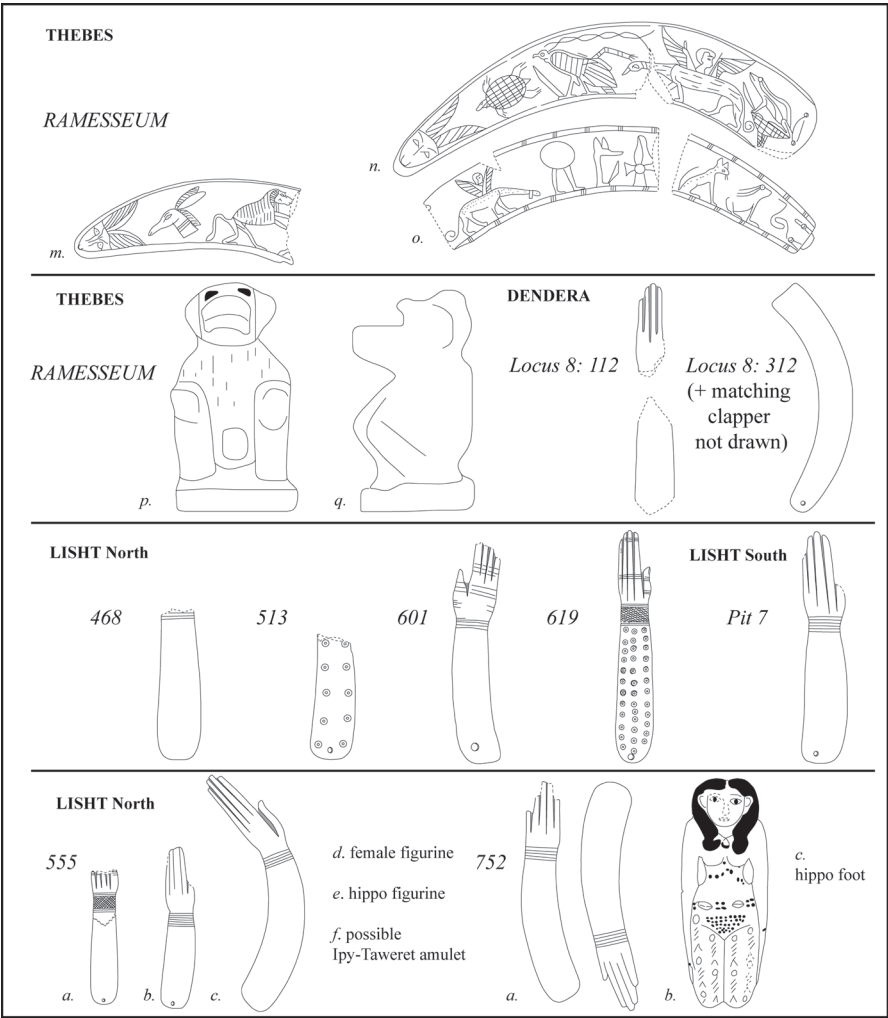


Fig. 5 – Archaeologically attested clappers and associated grave goods

**Ramesseum Tomb 5** (continued): m. ivory wand, l. 14 cm (Manchester Museum 1798); n. ivory wand, l. 25 cm (Manchester 1800); o. ivory wand, l. 15 cm (Manchester 1801); p. faience baboon, h. 5.7 cm (Manchester 1835) (m.-p. were drawn after images archived in the British Museum website <[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online\\_research\\_catalogues/rp/the\\_amesseum\\_papyri/the\\_archaeological\\_context/the\\_objects.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/online_research_catalogues/rp/the_amesseum_papyri/the_archaeological_context/the_objects.aspx)>, accessed 02.05.2015); q. faience baboon, h. 1.8 cm (Manchester 1837; redrawn from QUIBELL, *The Ramesseum*, pl. 3);

**Dendera 8:112**: ivory, h. 13.3 cm (Penn 29-65-546; after a photo provided by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology);

**Dendera 8:312**: ivory, h. 19.3 cm (Penn 29-65-531a; after OD. Its matching pair is not shown);

**Lisht North 468**: ivory, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph L13-14: 591);

**Lisht North 513**: ivory, h. 9 cm (after MMA expedition photograph L12-13: 649);

**Lisht North 601**: ivory, h. 12 cm (after the accession card photo for MMA 15.3.382);

**Lisht North 619**: ivory, h. 15.5 cm (after the accession card photo for MMA 15.3.256);

**Lisht South Pit 7**: ivory, h. 18 cm (MMA 33.1.28; after OD);

**Lisht North 555**: a. ivory, no meas.; b. ivory, no meas.; c. ivory, no meas. (MMA 09.180.1251) (a.-c. after MMA expedition photograph L10-11: 226. These clappers are correctly scaled with respect to one another); d. faience female figurine, no meas.; e. faience hippo figurine, no meas.; f. possible 'Ipy-Taweret' figurine, no meas. or material listed (d.-f. are recorded on MMA tomb card);

**Lisht 752**: a. ivory, h. 14 cm (after MMA expedition photograph L12-13: 676); b. faience figurine; 12 cm (MMA 08.200.18; after OD); c. faience hippo figurine (foot only), no meas. (recorded on MMA tomb card)

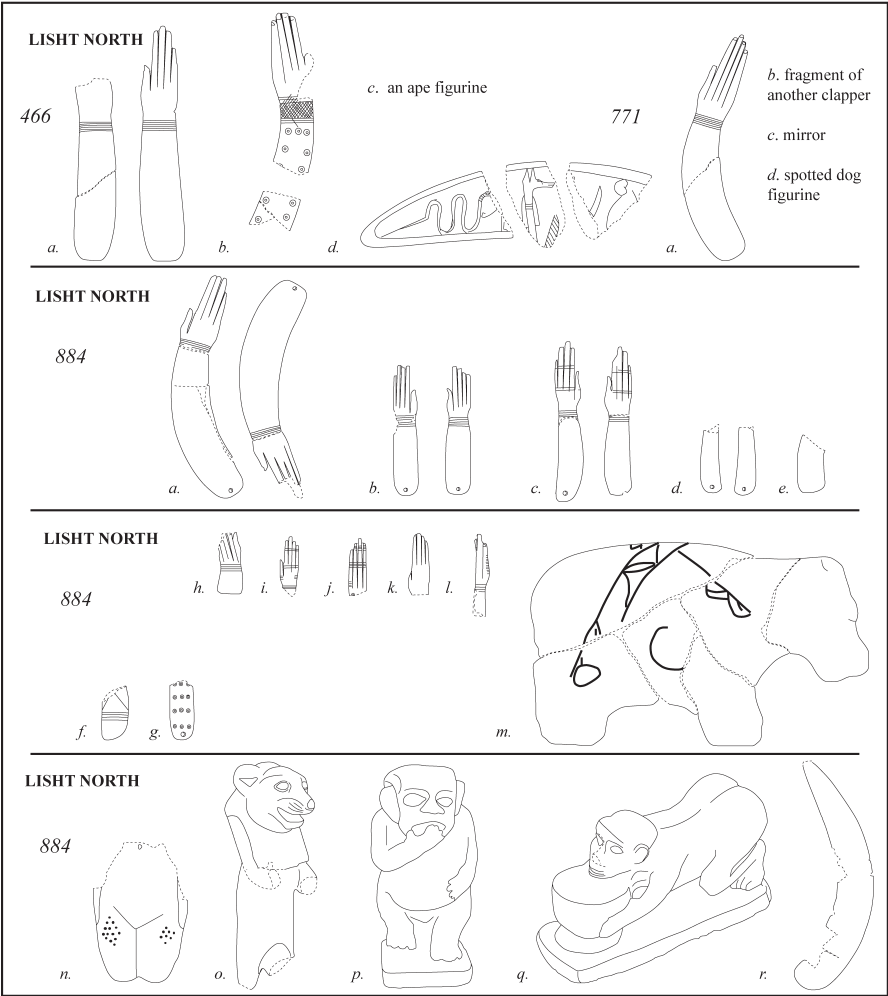


Fig. 6 – Archaeologically attested clappers and associated grave goods

**Lisht North 466:** a. ivory, max. h. 20.7 cm (after the accession card photos for MMA 15.3.169 and 15.3.168); b. ivory, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph L13-14: 645); c. limestone ape figurine, no meas. (recorded on MMA tomb card); d. ivory wand, l. 20.1 cm (MMA 15.3.167a.-c.; after OD);

**Lisht North 771:** a. ivory, h. 21.1 cm (MMA 11.151.622; after OD); b. ivory, no meas.; c. bronze mirror, h. 14 cm; d. faience spotted dog, no meas. (b.-d. recorded on MMA tomb card);

**Lisht North 884:** a. ivory, h. 25 cm; b. ivory, h. 14.5 cm; c. ivory, 18 cm; d.-l. ivory, no meas. (a.-l. are after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 599 and are drawn to relative scale); m. faience hippo figurine, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 542); n. faience figurine, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 537); o. ivory lion figurine; h. 7.4 cm (MMA 22.1.108; after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 532); p. faience dwarf, 5.2 cm (MMA 22.1.125; after OD); q. faience dwarf with a pot, l. 6.8 cm (MMA 22.1.124; after OD); r. plain ivory wand, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 599)

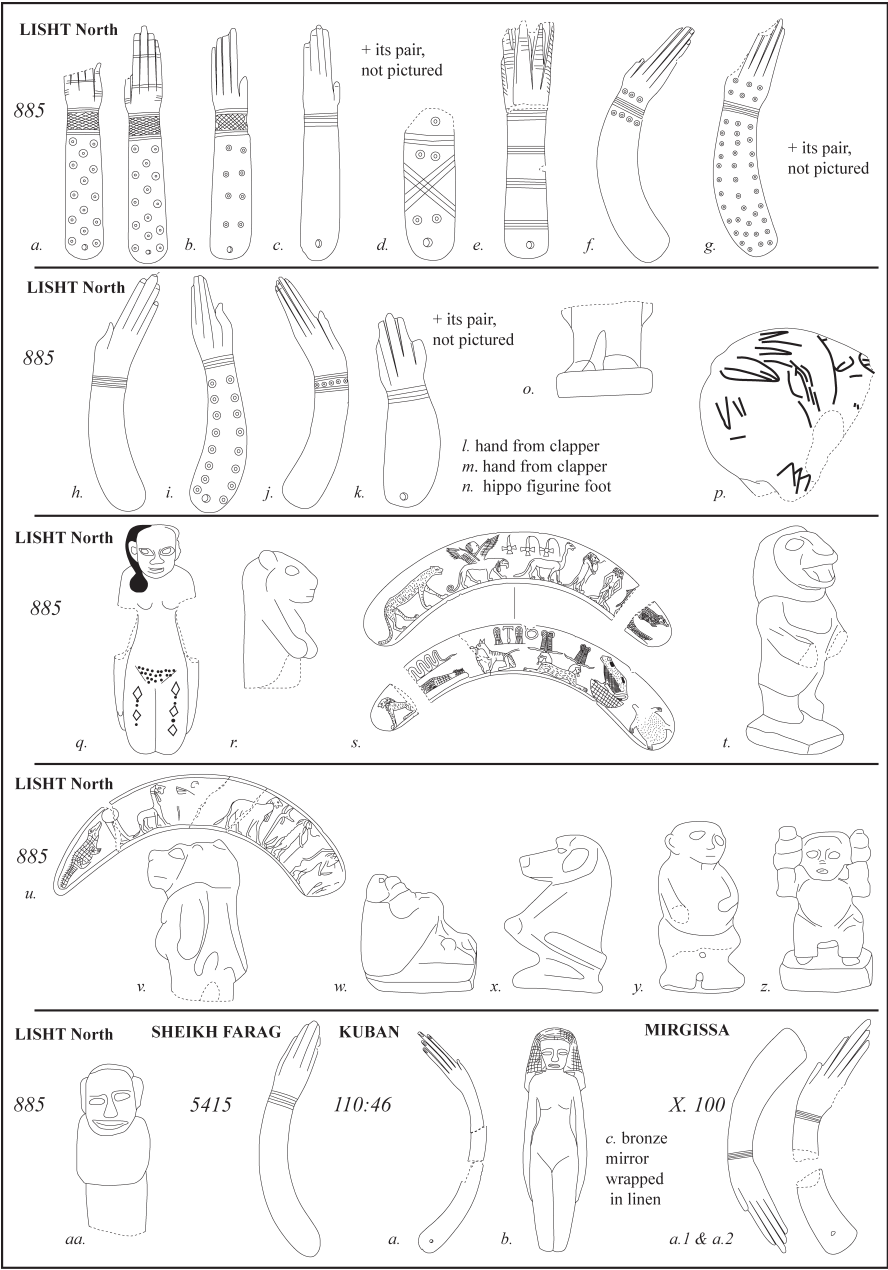


Fig. 7 – Archaeologically attested clappers and associated grave goods

**Lisht 885:** a. ivory, h. 17.3 (MMA 22.1.143; after OD); b. ivory, 16.4 cm; c. ivory, h. 16.5 cm; d. ivory, h. 5.4 cm (b.-d. after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 361); e. ivory, h. 15.4 cm (after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 361 and after the accession card photo for MMA 22.1.148); f. ivory, h. 21.2 cm (MMA 22.1.152; after OD); g. ivory, 21.8 cm (MMA 22.1.142; after OD. The other pair was found broken, present whereabouts unknown); h. ivory, 19.5 cm; i. ivory, no meas. (h.-i. after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 361); j. ivory, h. 20 cm (MMA 22.1.146; after OD); k. ivory, h. 10.5 cm (after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 361; pair not drawn); l. ivory, h. 8 cm; m. ivory, h. 13 cm.; n. foot from faience hippo, no meas. (l.-m. recorded on MMA tomb card); o. standing faience figure, no meas.; p. faience hippo, no meas. (o.-p. after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 535); q. faience figurine, h. 11.8 cm (MMA 22.1.180; after OD); r. faience lion, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 535); s. double-sided ivory wand, l. 31.1 cm (MMA 22.1.154a, b; redrawn from the MMA accession card photo); t. faience lion, h. 13.7 cm (MMA 22.1.178; after OD); u. ivory wand, l. 34.2 cm (MMA 22.1.153; redrawn from the MMA accession card photo); v. faience 'Ipy-Taweret' figurine, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph: L20-21: 535); w. limestone monkey figurine, h. 6 cm (MMA 22.1.1637; after OD); x. faience baboon, h. 1.6 cm (MMA 22.1.175; after the MMA accession card photo); y. faience dwarf, no meas. (after MMA expedition photograph L20-21: 535); z. faience dwarf carrying pots, h. 4.5 cm (after the accession card photo for MMA 22.1.177); aa. faience dwarf figurine, h. 5.1 cm (after the accession card photo for MMA 22.1.179);

**Sheikh Farag 5415:** wood, h. 19.6 cm (MFA 23-12-106; after OD);

**Kuban 110:46:** a. ivory, no meas. (after FIRTH, *Archaeological Survey*, pl. 26); b. clay figurine, no meas. (after FIRTH, *op. cit.*, pl. 27); c. bronze mirror, no meas. (recorded in FIRTH, *op. cit.*, 59);

**Mirgissa X 100:** ivory, h. max. 23 cm (a2 = IPEL E 25 652; after VERCOUTTER, *Mirgissa*, 108)



Obviously, considering the vast quantities of genuine but unprovenienced clappers in museums and on the antiquities market, we do not know the entirety of the story. Moreover, there are no doubt significant blind spots in my own survey of site reports and archives. Nonetheless, it can be safely stated that clappers were especially common at Abydos, Thebes, and Lisht. The fact that all three sites—as well as Harageh, Kahun, and Giza—were strongly associated with the cult of dead kings is of vital importance to understanding the function of this category of artifact, as will be discussed presently.

Figs. 1-7 illustrate the most recognizably religious or symbolic items that were discovered with clappers in Middle Kingdom (or, in the cases marked with an asterisk, mixed Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period) contexts. While there may have been much to gain from considering kohl pots, model vessels, pottery, scarabs, jewelry, and, especially, amulets, the items that are focused upon for the purposes of this essay consist of female figurines, mirrors, amuletic wands, faience figurines, and assorted other items that can be subsumed into the sphere of birth magic, such as masks and snake wands. These objects are rightly famous in the repertoire of Middle Kingdom material culture due to the fact that their association with realms sexual, spiritual, and occasionally monstrous renders them especially compelling inclusions in museum catalogues and books focusing on religion and magic. Yet considering the vast quantities of graves that have been excavated, such items cannot be classified as common.<sup>32</sup> The fact that they do appear with relative frequency in the company of clappers is thus significant, as will now be discussed drawing from multiple lines of evidence.

#### CLAPPERS LENT A HAND IN THE CREATION OF THE COSMOS

By virtue of its status as a well-documented and apparently unplundered archaeological context, tomb 10008 at Mostagedda constitutes one of only two cases in which the original deposition and ownership of a clapper is crystal clear. This burial, the plan of which is reproduced in Fig. 1, row 1, dates to the Sixth Dynasty, which is the earliest that a clearly defined hand-shaped clapper has been found in the archaeological record.<sup>33</sup> This type of instrument or implement is not again encountered until the Eleventh Dynasty at Asasif in tombs 815 and 839. Brunton determined that a female occupied the smaller of the two

<sup>32</sup> KEMP, MERRILLEES, *Minoan Pottery*, 168; GRAJETZKI, *Tomb Treasures of the Late Middle Kingdom*, 156; QUIRKE, *Lahun*, 99. For a recent study of the production and deposition of Middle Kingdom faience figurines, see MINIACI, *JEGH* 7.

<sup>33</sup> Small faience models of hands and forearms, which may perhaps have represented clappers, have been found in votive deposits in the Satet temple at Elephantine. They have been dated to the Fifth or Sixth Dynasty (DREYER, *Elephantine*, 117-8, nos. 195-201).

chambers in the Mostagedda tomb, and his assessment is perhaps bolstered by the fact that this individual wore a necklace that incorporated amulets of frogs, ‘Ipy-Tawerets’, and Hathor masks – *i.e.*, amulets that included deities strongly associated with the protection of women and children. In addition to the pots buried near her head and pelvis, a mirror was tucked under her chin, and a small, stuccoed box at her feet contained a single hand-shaped clapper together with two small alabaster toilet vessels.<sup>34</sup>

The provision of a single clapper and a mirror among the relatively few grave goods of a woman is important because these two items constituted the equipment necessary to perform a very particular type of Hathoric dance, depicted in the Sixth Dynasty above a doorway in chamber A 13 of Mereruka’s mastaba at Saqqara (Fig. 8). This dance has been analyzed in depth by Hans Hickmann, who argued on the basis of the clappers, the mirrors, and the caption above the scene that the performance specifically honored Hathor.<sup>35</sup> The strong association between Hathor and mirrors is well known, and there is evidence to suggest that mirrors may have served as cultic badges for her female

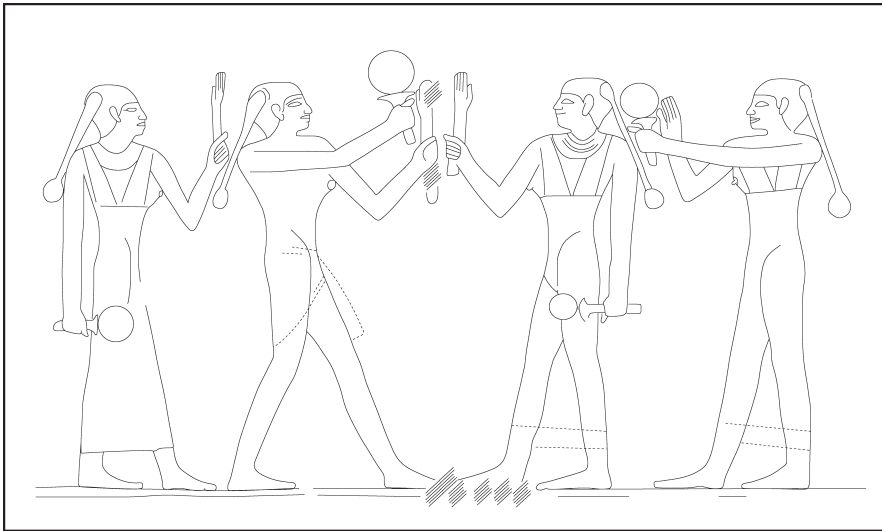


Fig. 8 – Clappers in the female sphere  
Mirror dance, Mastaba of Mereruka, chamber A 13, Saqqara (redrawn from  
SAKKARAH EXPEDITION, *Mereruka*, pl. 164)

<sup>34</sup> BRUNTON, *Mostagedda*, 99, 110, pl. 64.

<sup>35</sup> HICKMANN, *BIE* 37, 151-90.

officiates. Certainly, as early as the late Old Kingdom a significant number of mirrors were inscribed for priestesses of Hathor's cult.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, a mirror whose handle bore an image of the goddess was buried together with Amunet, the tattooed "sole Royal Ornament [and] Priestess of Hathor" buried in Mentuhotep II's temple-tomb complex directly adjacent to Asasif.<sup>37</sup> It is undoubtedly significant, then, that the title "sole Royal Ornament" (*hkrt nsw wʿtt*), borne by a significant number of women associated with the goddess's cult, is sometimes determined by a mirror, while at other times the sign employed indicated the motion of hands and feet in dancing.<sup>38</sup>

In exploring the significance of the clapper, Hickmann drew upon the Heliopolitan creation myth, evident already in the Pyramid Texts, in which the sun god gave life to the first deities through an act of masturbation.<sup>39</sup> By the First Intermediate Period, and thus likely already in the late Old Kingdom, the sun god's hand became identified with a goddess—given the epithet 'the hand of Atum'—who was often subsumed into the persona of Hathor.<sup>40</sup> This equation, no doubt, explains Hathor's near ubiquitous presence in early sun temples and in mortuary temples, a venue in which the deceased king and the sun god were so tightly fused as to be at times indistinguishable.<sup>41</sup> In Hickmann's view, then, the hand-shaped clappers used in the mirror dance celebrated Hathor as a full partner in the sun god's act of cosmic creation.

The scene in Mereruka's tomb shows four demonstrably young females taking part in the dance, three of whom grasp a mirror in one hand and a hand-shaped clapper in the other. Two of these dancers hold their clappers up before a mirror, while the fourth dancer, the only one lacking a clapper, raises her own hand up before her mirror instead. In discussing this scene, Lisa Kinney has elaborated on Hickmann's theory, formulating the ingenious suggestion that if the dance took place outdoors, then the mirrors would have caught the sunlight and brilliantly refracted it so that they resembled solar discs in miniature. Thus when the dancers held the clappers up to their mirrors, the moment of creation would have been symbolically reenacted. Further, the dancer who held her own hand up to a mirror may have been especially important, for in her act the hand of Atum transformed from ivory to flesh as the dancer channeled the spirit of

<sup>36</sup> LILYQUIST, *Mirrors*, 97-8.

<sup>37</sup> WINLOCK, *Treasure of El Lahun*, 62.

<sup>38</sup> FISCHER, *Dendera*, 136, n. 591. See also the discussion in TOOLEY, *Middle Kingdom Burial Customs*, 324-5.

<sup>39</sup> HICKMANN, *BIE* 37, 158-60.

<sup>40</sup> For the currency of this myth prior to the Middle Kingdom, see VANDIER, *RdE* 16, 55-60; KINNEY, *Dance*, 166.

<sup>41</sup> The 'union' of Hathor and Re remained a cause for symbolic re-enactments and festivities for millennia, as is evident from the religious programs at Greco-Roman temples like Dendera; see BLEEKER, *Hathor and Thoth*, 65-6, 89-90.

the goddess.<sup>42</sup> Such shamanistic moments, though rare in Egyptian religion, did occur in the cult of Hathor. The goddess is certainly evoked in the frustratingly enigmatic caption to the dance which is thought to read perhaps (*irry n iwf n iwf hnwt dd.s rn nfr n hm(t) hwt-hr* “On being beaten, flesh (or clapper?) to (against) flesh (or clapper?), the Mistress she says her beautiful name to/of the Lady Hathor”).<sup>43</sup> This ‘beautiful’ name, Hickmann suggests, would refer to the goddess’s identity as the personified hand of Atum.

At only 11.4 cm in length, the Mostagedda clapper is significantly smaller in scale than the clappers held by the women in Mereruka’s scene. Claude Sourdivé has estimated that the dancers’ clappers would have been between 30–38 cm in length, significantly longer than any excavated clapper of comparable structure.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the clappers seem to have been magnified for the sake of clarity as well as, presumably, to emphasize their importance in the scene. Regardless, the fact that the Mostagedda clapper –the first of its kind– was found on its own, rather than in a pair, together with a woman and her mirror, and in the same short window in which this particular dance is depicted in private tombs, suggests that the hand-clapper tradition was indeed rooted in the mirror dance.<sup>45</sup> In this performance each dancer grasped a single clapper that –in addition to being held against the mirror to mimic the original act of creation– was to be beat against another dancer’s clapper. The eventual inclusion of pairs of clappers and curved clappers in graves suggests that dances that incorporated hand-shaped clappers evolved and multiplied over time. Pairs of large clappers might be held one in each hand and beat together – as was common practice with boomerang-shaped clappers, while their smaller equivalents were likely both held in a single hand and played like the ‘bones’ rattled in nineteenth and early twentieth century American minstrel shows.<sup>46</sup>

Given this early and close connection between clappers, young dancers, and mirrors, it is notable that mirrors and clappers were found together in nine contexts (Mostagedda 10008, Lisht 771, Abydos E 250, Abydos E 260, Abydos G 62, Kuban 110:46, Asasif 6A, Asasif 815, Asasif 839). While it cannot be proven that in all cases they were owned by the same person, the possibility that they did form a kit is perhaps bolstered by the fact that mirrors were discovered

<sup>42</sup> KINNEY, *Dance*, 166–7.

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, 165. An alternative translation would be “That which was made by the body through the body of the mistress that she may say her beautiful name of the Lady Hathor” (*op. cit.*, 167). For an extended discussion of this caption, see HICKMANN, *BIE* 37, 166–70.

<sup>44</sup> SOURDIVE, *La main dans l’Égypte pharaonique*, 195.

<sup>45</sup> The mirror dance is also depicted in the roughly contemporary tomb of Unis-anhk (TT 413), only a stone’s throw from Asasif. Although no clappers were found or depicted in this tomb, it did contain the earliest known example of a paddle doll (MORRIS, *JARCE* 47, 75–6, 98–9). As shall be seen, clappers and paddle dolls were frequently discovered in the same contexts at Asasif, so the association of both with the mirror dance is unlikely to be coincidental.

<sup>46</sup> HICKMANN, *BIE* 37, 112–3.

together with clappers and female figurines in four instances (Kuban 110:46, Asasif 6A, Asasif 815 and Asasif 839). Female figurines and clappers were discovered together without any notation of mirrors in a further nine instances (Abydos E 5, Abydos 504, Asasif 518, Asasif 1112, Ramesseum 5, Lisht 555, Lisht 752, Lisht 884, Lisht 885). Perhaps significantly, in all of the assemblages except that of Kuban, the female figurines and mirrors were always interred with at least one clapper that was either straight or only slightly curved. Likewise, although the handles of mirrors did not survive in a vast majority of cases, the papyriform handle preserved in Asasif 815 closely resembled that used by the mirror dancers in Mereruka's mastaba, while the female figurine discovered in Lisht 885 wore the same distinctively youthful and Hathoric hairstyle as the mirror dancers (Fig. 3-row 2 and Fig. 7-row 3). Finally, it is undoubtedly important to note that in the eighteen contexts just mentioned, only Mostagedda 10008 and Kuban 110:46 were not located at the strongly royal centers of Abydos, Thebes, and Lisht.

Paddle dolls and their typically Middle Kingdom truncated counterparts almost certainly represented *hnr*-dancers, performers that were associated with palaces, divine temples, and mortuary temples, and who also performed at parties, funerals, and festivals.<sup>47</sup> Depictions of these troupes on tomb walls show them to have been especially associated with the goddess Hathor. Considering that *hnr* troupes frequently danced Hathoric dances in mortuary temples, it is significant that finds of paddle dolls are centered primarily at Asasif around the mortuary temple of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II, while the slightly later truncated female figurines are found most frequently in the cemeteries located near the Middle Kingdom pyramids (and pyramid temples) at Lisht.<sup>48</sup> In these contexts *hnr* women danced in order to revivify the king, who was, again, in death mythically identified with the sun god Re. In the Contendings of Horus and Seth, a tale circulating already in the Middle Kingdom,<sup>49</sup> the sun god—rendered prone and inert by depression—was revived by the sight of his daughter's vulva, revealed to him in a sudden, unexpected exposure. Thus, it is likely that the dancers, who were often associated symbolically with the real king's daughters and who purposefully exposed themselves in the course of particularly 'athletic' dances, channeled the goddess Hathor in order to arouse the king from his deathlike slumber and to delight his spirit. Their presence in Sed-festivals almost certainly served the same purpose, namely that of imbuing the king with renewed vigor.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> MORRIS, *JARCE* 47, 71-103. For the institution of the *hnr*, see NORD, in SIMPSON, DAVIS (eds.), *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, 137-45.

<sup>48</sup> With regard to Asasif, see MORRIS, *JARCE* 47, 75; for Lisht, see TOOLEY, *Middle Kingdom Burial Customs*, 325-6.

<sup>49</sup> PARKINSON, *Voices from Ancient Egypt*, 120-1.

<sup>50</sup> MORRIS, *JARCE* 47, 83-7; MORRIS, in SCHNEIDER, SZPAKOWSKA (eds.), *Egyptian Stories*, 197-224.

After the First Intermediate Period, when solar and Osirian afterlives became widely available to those outside the royal circle, female figurines were quite likely adopted by those who could afford them as potentially effective representations of the *hnr*-women attached to mortuary temples. It is likely that the figurines were deemed capable of dancing for the soul of their new owner and thereby arousing it from dormancy. Thus kits of clappers, mirrors, and female figurines, or various configurations of these three items found in domestic or mortuary contexts, were almost certainly tied to the creation or reinfusion of new life.

Further, like mirrors, clappers may have served in some cases as identity markers for performers in the service of Hathor and/or the cult of the dead king. Asasif tombs 815 and 839, both located in close proximity to one another just south of Mentuhotep II's temple-tomb causeway, are particularly interesting to consider given that archival records show that they contained remarkably similar burial assemblages. Mirrors, paddle dolls, clappers, and toilet boxes containing bundles of hair extensions and aromatic wood were discovered among the grave goods of both tombs. The wild hair of paddle dolls is justly famous, and one of the paddle dolls interred in tomb 815 was clearly meant to be a child. So perhaps the women (and/or girls) buried in Asasif tombs 815 and 839—with their toilet boxes full of clappers, false locks of hair, and sweet smelling wood—should be interpreted as the living counterparts of the paddle doll performers with which they were buried.<sup>51</sup> The adolescent girl recently discovered in a coffin burial just outside the walls of the funerary enclosure of a deceased king at Abydos (Operation 164, Locus 37), with her hair extensions and the diamond motifs much beloved by dancers decorating her headband, also constitutes a convincing candidate for a *hnr*-performer.

Before leaving the subject of clappers and their various roles in ritual enactments of cosmic creation and in the infusion of new life to the blessed dead, it is worth addressing the idea first suggested by Betsy Bryan that the determinative for the word *hnr* (Gardiner's sign U31)<sup>52</sup> represents two crossed clappers, as is depicted in a variant writing.<sup>53</sup> The root of the word *hnr*, she argues, should be found in the verb *hni*, meaning to “clap” or “keep time”. If Bryan is right, clappers must have been deemed foundational on both a mythic and a practical level to the performance of sacred dances. Old Kingdom tomb reliefs depict troupes frequently performing with boomerang-shaped clappers. Hand-shaped clappers, however, had the virtue of not only summoning to mind the story of the sun and his Hathoric hand but also of

<sup>51</sup> See WINLOCK, *Excavations at Deir El Bahri*, 72, 207-8.

<sup>52</sup> GARDINER, *Grammar*, 519.

<sup>53</sup> BRYAN, *BES* 4, 49-50.

serving as visual puns, equating instruments useful for keeping the beat with their god-given prototypes.

#### CLAPPERS LENT A HAND DURING BIRTH, REBIRTH, AND EVEN, PERHAPS, PUBERTY

Ann Macy Roth's competing and equally compelling explanation for the origin of the *hnr*-determinative serves as a fitting segue to the next subject of consideration, namely the relationship between clappers and life-stages or transitions.<sup>54</sup> Roth suggests that the variant determinative depicting crossed clappers was a later (mis)interpretation. Originally, she argues, the U31 sign represented a *psš-kf* knife, which was used by midwives to cut the umbilical cord. That *hnr*-troupes could double as midwives – or at least be intimately associated with rites of childbirth – is implied by the story in Papyrus Westcar in which the most effective disguise that four deities could envision for being allowed to aid in the divine birth of future kings was that of a troupe of musicians, knowledgeable about childbirth. Taking this association into account, Roth mounts a strong argument that the 'secret' of every female *hnr*-troupe performer, referred to in a song performed by a *hnr*-troupe in the tomb chapel of Mereruka's wife, Watetkhethor, constituted the skill of midwifery.<sup>55</sup>

If *hnr*-women did serve as midwives and adopted the *psš*-knife for their signature, the existence of figurines of such dancers holding babies would be more easily explained. Just as *hnr* performers presided at births, however, they also danced at funerals – or perhaps more aptly at *re*-births. Such was only fitting, as both passages were closely overseen by the same goddess, who was not only the "hand of Atum" and the "lady of the dance" but also "she (who) may cause to give birth the one who is to give birth", and – more somberly – the "mistress of the (Western) Desert".<sup>56</sup> Like the Hathoric *hnr*-dancers, *psš-kf* knives also had a role in funerals and no doubt served the same purpose of facilitating the transition from this life to the next. This mirroring of rites and rituals associated with birth and rebirth – two transitions perhaps equally fraught with danger – is a characteristic feature of Egyptian mortuary culture and never more so than in the Middle Kingdom, especially towards the end of this era.<sup>57</sup> In this respect, hand-shaped clappers were very much artifacts of their time.

The mirror dance is not the only context in which hand-shaped clappers appear in the tomb of Mereruka. Just above this dance, another performance is showcased in which the main participants were boys (Fig. 9, row 1). This dance

<sup>54</sup> ROTH, *JEA* 78, 140-1, 143.

<sup>55</sup> See also KANAWATI, ABDER-RAZIQ, *Mereruka*, 26, pl. 60a.

<sup>56</sup> BLEEKER, *Hathor and Thoth*, 40, 42, 54; PINCH, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 222.

<sup>57</sup> ROTH, *JEA* 78, 113, 147; WEGNER, in SILVERMAN, SIMPSON, WEGNER (eds.), *Archaisms and Innovation*, 485; ROTH, ROEHRIG, *JEA* 88, 121-36, 138-9.



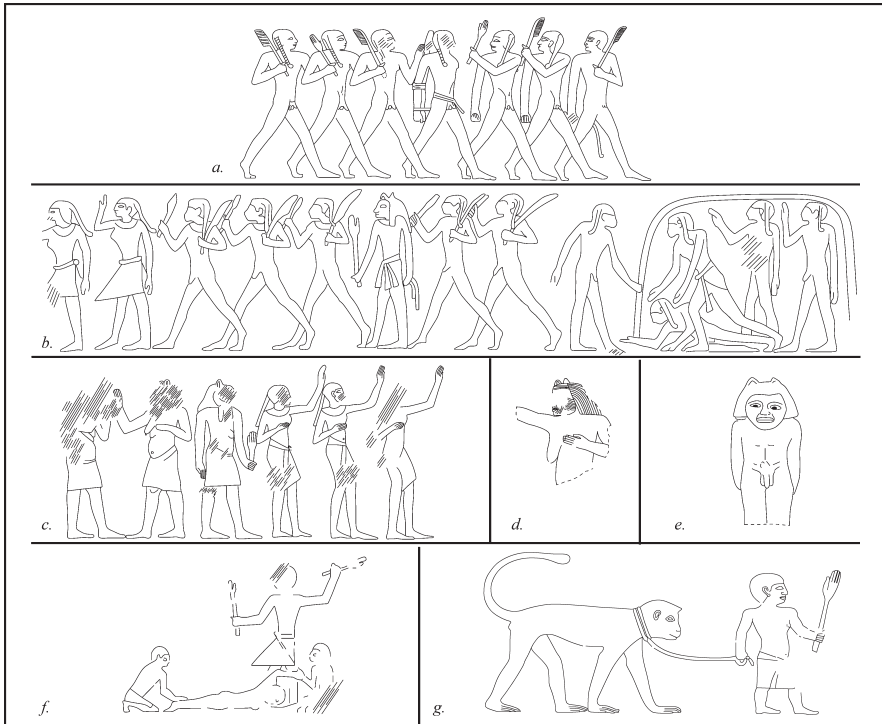


Fig. 9 – Clappers and hand-shaped batons in the male sphere

- a. Boys' game, Mastaba of Mereruka, chamber A 13, Saqqara (redrawn from SAKKARAH EXPEDITION, *Mereruka*, pl. 162);
- b. Boys' game, relief said to come from Giza (BM EA 994) (redrawn from SMITH, *History of Egyptian Sculpture*, 211, fig. 83);
- c. Scene from Amenhotep III's Heb Sed, tomb of Kheruef, Thebes (redrawn from EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Kheruef*, pl. 24);
- d. 'Aha-Bes' from a relief in Sahure's pyramid temple, Abu Sir (Leipzig 2095) (redrawn from ROMANO, *Bes-Image*, vol. II, 7, cat. no. 1);
- e. Statuette of 'Aha-Bes' from Neferirkare's pyramid temple; Abu Sir (East Berlin 18175) (redrawn from ROMANO, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 10, cat. no. 2);
- f. Scene of a beating from the tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi (redrawn from KANAWATI, *Deir el-Gebrawi*, pl. 70);
- g. Dwarf animal tender from the mastaba of Ti, Saqqara (redrawn from SOURDIVE, *La main dans l'Égypte pharaonique*, 28, pl. 10)

—for it is occasionally captioned as such (*hbt*)— is paralleled in four other tombs, all of which also date to the late Old Kingdom and were similarly situated in the most elite Memphite cemeteries (at Saqqara and in one case, perhaps, also



at Giza).<sup>58</sup> So far as the dances can be reconstructed, they seem to dramatize episodes in a narrative that involved the capture and forcible escort of a prisoner, presumably towards justice.

In the Mereruka scene, under a rather obscure caption that reads something to the effect of “a foreigner comes, listen to his wish, another sees and is afraid” (*ii šm3 sdm n ib.f m33 ky snd.f*),<sup>59</sup> three of the six boys that marched the prisoner away in triumph carried stylized reed leaves over their shoulders, while two instead gripped hand-shaped clappers or batons.<sup>60</sup> While one of the boys carried his clapper over his shoulder, the other brandished his implement directly before the face of the bound captive. In this instance, there is no reason to imagine that the clapper signified the Hand of Atum. Rather its use is paralleled in a handful of Old Kingdom scenes in which men grasping hand-shaped batons hauled those who had not paid sufficient taxes or were otherwise in legal difficulty before the authorities. In the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi (Fig. 9-row 4f) an individual appears to be utilizing two hand-shaped batons to pummel a wrong-doer, depicted stripped and pinned to the ground by two other men. Here any sound produced by the two ‘hands’ must have been the sickening clap of batons striking naked flesh.<sup>61</sup>

The authority and capacity for violence inherent in these hand-shaped batons is given a much more humorous twist in another genre of scene, found in Old to Middle Kingdom tombs, which depicted the overseer of monkeys and/or dogs.<sup>62</sup> In these scenes the batons are carried by ordinary men and also by dwarfs (Fig. 9-row 4g), in whose hands the hand-shaped batons looked especially big. Given that the hand-shaped baton could be interchanged in similar scenes for the scepter of power (*shm*), it is likely that it too symbolized authority – even if the authority was only that wielded by a little person over household animals. These twin elements of danger and fun were no doubt combined to good effect in the dramatic dance depicted in Mereruka’s tomb.

The role of the hand-shaped clapper in the boys’ dance becomes even more intriguing in a relief said to have come from a tomb in Giza, now housed in the British Museum (EA 994), which is dated on stylistic grounds to the late Fifth or early Sixth Dynasty (Fig. 9-row 2). Captioned “dancing by the

<sup>58</sup> This genre of performance is discussed by KINNEY, *Dance*, 146-53.

<sup>59</sup> *Op. cit.*, 149. See SOURDIVE, *La main dans l’Égypte pharaonique*, 55 for an alternate but equally confusing translation, “Viens, nomade (?) qui a obéi à son coeur, si un autre voit (cela), il a peur!”

<sup>60</sup> Given that these implements were distinguished from those held by girls on the same wall only in their slightly greater length and that they too were wielded in the context of a dance, the term ‘clapper’ is here preferred.

<sup>61</sup> For this type of scene, see SOURDIVE, *La main dans l’Égypte pharaonique*, 2-13. The word employed for the same type of baton in an adjacent scene, *kt3it*, is determined with the sign for a forearm and hand (*op. cit.*, 12-3).

<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.*, 19-47.

*šdht*-youths” (*hbt in šdht*), the scene depicts a line of boys who look very much like those in Mereruka’s tomb but who hold scepters or batons in place of hand-shaped clappers. The boys, all painted in a ruddy hue, seem to follow behind females labeled as *hnr*-dancers, while in their midst a figure wearing a felid mask or headdress stands or strides slowly and grips a hand-shaped baton. Although this hybrid being is depicted at a similar scale to the boys, his image stands out visually as it remains unpainted, giving the impression that his skin tone is lighter. Unless the lack of paint was simply an artistic convention to clearly distinguish him from the boys to either side, the figure’s apparent whiteness may perhaps have reproduced the effect of pigment smeared on his body to heighten his otherworldly character. Alternatively, as James Romano has tentatively suggested, the lighter skin tone, the stiff pose, and the cloth grasped in his other hand may have signaled to the viewer that this entity was in fact not an active participant at all but rather a statue around which the boys danced.<sup>63</sup>

Determining the identity of the therianthropic felid figure is nearly as confusing as tackling the question of whether a boy, an actor, a priest, or an effigy represented him in the dance. Most scholars regard this entity as a manifestation of the lion-headed protective daemon Aha (‘the fighter’), who is labeled as such on at least two Middle Kingdom amuletic wands (Berlin 14207 and Brussels E 2643), or as one of a class of supernatural entities that assumed this form.<sup>64</sup> Aha worked together with a number of other fearful but ultimately protective forces (*sšw*) to guard the vulnerable solar child before and after his rebirth into the eastern sky. By extension, then, he and his compatriots were believed also to protect fetuses, newborns, and young children identified through sympathetic magic with the sun god (as well as the mothers that bore and protected them).<sup>65</sup> By the Second Intermediate Period, and likely before, Aha would be subsumed into the corporate character of Bes, the protector of women, children, festivity, and childbirth. For our purposes, it is important to note that in the British Museum scene, the daemon grasped an authoritative hand-shaped clapper instead of a snake, in contrast to his typical representation on amuletic wands and other magical objects. As shall be seen below, however, there is evidence that the same entities that wielded snakes in some contexts brandished clappers in others.

Not surprisingly, this scene and others of its genre have provoked much discussion. The dance occurs in the British Museum relief just above a scene of men loading bags of grain on donkeys, and so some view the dance as taking

<sup>63</sup> ROMANO, *Bes-Image*, vol. II, 12-3.

<sup>64</sup> The numerous distinct identities of a variety of ‘Bes-figures’ are discussed by ROMANO, *Bes-Image*, vol. I, 12-3.

<sup>65</sup> ALTENMÜLLER, *Die Apotropaia*, 79-122, 136-77.

place within the context of a harvest festival.<sup>66</sup> Others, however, argue that the performance marked a personal rather than a seasonal milestone. The name of the god Bes, with whom the lion-headed figure could already have been associated, may have derived from the verb *bs*, *i.e.* “to initiate”.<sup>67</sup> Given the presence of games of strength, menacing masked figures, and huts of seclusion in ethnographically attested African coming of age ceremonies, a variety of scholars have suggested that the boys’ performances occurred as part of a rite of passage.<sup>68</sup>

While ethnographic analogies should be employed only with great caution to think in the broadest of brushstrokes about cultural dynamics in ancient societies, the Egyptians certainly did mark the transition from boyhood to manhood via the rite of circumcision and the shaving of the hairlock of youth. Thus one might imagine that celebrations of such rites for cohorts of young men might take place as an integral part of harvest festivities. Certainly, the fact that the daemon in the British Museum relief wore a belt characteristic of fertility figures and that a female *hnr*-troupe joined the boys in their celebration suggests that a spirit of sexual exuberance prevailed, which would be entirely appropriate. In the context of such rites and festivities, then, one can imagine that all the polyvalent associations of the hand-shaped baton would come into play. The hand brandished by the daemon must have combined in its essence the power to punish (as when wielded by spiritual or terrestrial enforcers), the power to create life (when wielded by the *hnr*, channeling their goddess), and the power to excite laughter (when wielded by dwarfs or perhaps masked ‘clowns’, if –like a whip-wielding Pueblo Koshare– the individual impersonating the Egyptian daemon regarded fear and laughter as flipsides of the same coin).

Like the dance performed by the girls in Mereruka’s tomb, it is likely that the ‘boys’ dance derived at least in part from royal rituals that were subsequently privatized and popularized. The strongest argument for this view is that lion-masked figures, very similar to the one discovered in the British Museum scene, are present also in Sed-festival scenes, sometimes in association with female *hnr*-troupes. This is most clearly witnessed in a scene depicting dances performed in front of Amenhotep III and Hathor by sidelock-wearing *hnr*-performers (Fig. 9- row 3c). A procession of such girls, following behind other dancers and ultimately behind a group of libating princesses, raised their hands in a gesture of salute virtually identical to the pose of the *hnr*-performers in the British Museum relief. Behind these dancing girls stood a lion-masked figure holding a hand-shaped implement. Two other almost certainly lion-masked

<sup>66</sup> JANSSEN, JANSSEN, *Growing Up*, 65.

<sup>67</sup> DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 56.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, CAPART, *BIFAO* 30, 74-5; JESI, *Aegyptus* 38, 172-81.

individuals –judging from the upright ears still visible on one and the pendulous bellies sported by both– faced each other behind him.

The fact that the hand-shaped baton or clapper (for here its dimensions more closely resemble the latter) had been absent from Egyptian art for a millennium and that the scene of the lion-masked man behind the *hnr*-dancer so closely paralleled the British Museum relief strongly suggests that, just as Kheruef asserted, Amenhotep III drew inspiration from royal rites of bygone eras.<sup>69</sup> A fragment of a scene in Sahure's pyramid temple depicting a very similar lion-headed man (Fig. 9-row 3d) was excavated in relatively close proximity to fragments depicting the performance of *hnr*-women and to other imagery typical of Sed-festivals. Likewise, it is no doubt significant that a limestone statuette of a very similar daemon was discovered in the pyramid temple of Neferirkare at Abu Sir<sup>70</sup> (Fig. 9-row 3e). The similarities between these royal and private monuments, one suspects, may have resulted as much from their mutual reliance on older folk traditions –which royalty made sure to elevate, elaborate, and ornament– as from the desire of nobles to emulate kings. Just as boys turned to men, so those pharaohs who ruled thirty years passed into another heightened state of being. Significantly, at both crucial rites of transition, lion-headed daemons wielding their hand-shaped clapper/batons stood sentinel.

Identifying hand-shaped clappers as again sharing space with Hathoric dancers is of obvious interest and importance given the points raised in the prior section. The iconographic link between hand-shaped clappers and lion-headed daemons is equally interesting, however, as archaeologically recoverable clappers were frequently found in the company of images of similar lion-headed daemons and of their female counterparts. The snake-grasping, lion-headed 'Aha-Bes' figure appears as a faience statuette in Abydos G62 and on at least three of the ten decorated amuletic wands discovered in association with hand-shaped clappers (Ramesseum 5, Lisht 885, Asasif 839).<sup>71</sup> As mentioned previously, amuletic wands were commonly decorated with protective entities (*s3w*) that guarded the solar child during the period of his greatest vulnerability. In this context, the other major theory to explain Bes's name –that it was rooted in the word for "flame" (*bs*) and thus alludes to the lion-headed figure's role as a defender and occasional hypostasis of the sun god<sup>72</sup>– is also persuasive.

If the male lion-headed figure with his snakes and his clappers protected solar rebirth and, by extension, human births, the passage of adolescents into manhood, and the renaissance of kingship in the Sed-festival, his female

<sup>69</sup> EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *The Tomb of Kheruef*, 43.

<sup>70</sup> See ROMANO, *Bes-Image*, vol. II, 5-10; WENTE, in KADISH (ed.), *Studies in Honor of Wilson*, 86-9.

<sup>71</sup> Three uninscribed hippo tusks, also found with hand-shaped clappers (Abydos E 5; Asasif 839; Lisht 884), may similarly have served as amuletic wands.

<sup>72</sup> DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 56. For the role of Bes in solar theology, see MALAISE, in ISRAELIT-GROLL (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology*, 680-729; QUAEGBEUR, *La naine et le bouquetin*, 128.

counterpart may have functioned similarly, though perhaps in more emphatically female spheres. This unnamed divine personage, referred to for convenience as Beset, appears only once on the amuletic wands found together with the clappers (Ramesseum 5), although she was no stranger to this genre.<sup>73</sup> While depicted relatively frequently in two dimensions, however, Beset is rarely represented in three. Thus it is notable that she appears in statuette form together with clappers twice (Ramesseum 5 and Kahun) – two out of the only three instances, in fact, in which her statuettes have been excavated in their primary context.<sup>74</sup>

The cache discovered in Ramesseum 5 is often written about given that many of the artifacts found therein were strongly associated with birth magic.<sup>75</sup> These included two clappers, the statuette of Beset brandishing snake wands, four amuletic wands, a magical amuletic rod, a paddle doll, four typically Middle Kingdom truncated female figurines, and a stash of papyri that included medico-magical prescriptions relevant to pregnancy, childbirth, and the protection of infants. The character of the assemblage has convinced most scholars that this equipment – equally at home in houses and tombs of the period – originally belonged to a specialist in the health of pregnant women and the very young.<sup>76</sup> The fact that men were more often literate than women suggests the owner was male. On the other hand, however, it is notable that the statuette depicted a female and that the small snakes Beset grasped were mirrored in a larger metal snake wand that was also found in the tomb. Thus the full-sized snake wand may well have belonged to a nurse (*mn<sup>c</sup>t*), midwife, or other female practitioner who channeled the spirit of Beset as she harnessed divine forces to aid in her work. In the course of performing magic, magicians frequently assumed the personality and voice of the deity deemed most relevant to the situation at hand. Thus, one imagines that Beset might have been temporarily embodied in particularly dramatic shamanistic performances in order to affect the trajectory of difficult births or life-threatening childhood illness.

This notion that magical practitioners periodically embodied Beset is widely accepted primarily due to the discovery by Flinders Petrie at Kahun of a well-worn mask that looks very much like it could have been donned by a woman aiming to

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, WEGNER, in SILVERMAN, SIMPSON, WEGNER. (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation*, 466, fig. 10.

<sup>74</sup> The other statuette (MMA 15.3.1105) came from Lisht 449. The find of a similar figure (MMA 15.3.1088) in a surface context at the same site suggests that wooden statuettes of this divine entity may have been more common than their recovery rate suggests.

<sup>75</sup> See most recently, GNIRS, in KESSLER *et al.* (eds.), *Texte – Theben – Tonfragmente*, 128–55.

<sup>76</sup> See QUIRKE, *Exploring Religion*, 194–5, however, for a cautionary note. Opinions differ as to whether the objects constituted grave goods, as no hint of a burial was found with them. See QUIBELL, *The Ramesseum*, 2–4 and pl. 3, as well as KEMP, MERRILLEES, *Minoan Pottery*, 166 and PINCH, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 217. Many of the same types of artifacts were excavated in houses at Kahun. See PETRIE, *Kahun*, pl. 8; see also BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 110.

channel the protective daemon. In a back room of the same rambling house, someone had dug a small hole and cached a wooden statuette of Beset together with the pair of cow-headed clappers discussed previously (Fig. 2-row 3). Elsewhere in the house, Petrie discovered a stash of papyri very similar in character to the healing papyri in the Ramesseum tomb.<sup>77</sup> Given the presence within the house of all these items, it is generally accepted that someone who lived there occasionally embodied the goddess and wielded her clappers in ceremonies that took place perhaps in birthing chambers, at festivals, or even in the king's mortuary temple, which was located quite close by. In this regard, Josef Wegner's recent discoveries of clappers in the contemporaneous temple-town of Wahsut at Abydos are of special importance (Fig. 2-row 3). Wegner excavated one of these clappers in a deposit of refuse from Senwoseret III's mortuary temple, while the other came from disturbed debris in the mayor's house.<sup>78</sup> A birth brick and an amuletic wand, also excavated in the mayor's house, demonstrate that birth-related ritual took place there. One suspects, however, that in the context of the king's mortuary temple, it was *rebirths* and *revivifications* for which the clappers clapped.

The finds of Beset figurines together with clappers in the Ramesseum tomb and in the house at Kahun suggest that, like her male counterpart, Beset may have been equally associated with clappers and snakes. Full-sized snake wands, such as that found in the Ramesseum, have only been discovered in a few archaeological contexts;<sup>79</sup> thus it is undoubtedly significant that a second snake wand was interred together with clappers in a Second Intermediate Period tomb at Buhen (K45, chamber E).<sup>80</sup> While the association between snakes and clappers in archaeology and their interchangeability in iconography cannot be linked to a similarity in shape or material, both implements may have been viewed as powerful apotropaic devices. The protective nature of guardian snakes in Egypt is everywhere apparent, but clappers too are known ethnographically at least to be capable of driving off evil spirits when struck with force. Indeed clappers are often suggested to have evolved out of throwsticks, which is highly significant given that flocks of birds could symbolize the enemies of the sun and other demonic forces in Egyptian thought. Thus the act of hurling a throwstick vanquished evil as did, in later periods, the act of dedicating a model throwstick to a temple or interring one in a tomb.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> PETRIE, *Kahun*, 30; QUIRKE, *Lahun*, 82-4; BOSSE-GRIFFITHS, *JEA* 63, 104.

<sup>78</sup> The clapper associated with the temple has been published in WEGNER, *Mortuary Temple of Senwoseret III*, 259, fig. 109. The clapper found in the mayor's house is unpublished, but Josef Wegner generously provided a photo and contextual information.

<sup>79</sup> See RITNER, in SZPAKOWSKA (ed.), *Through a Glass Darkly*, 206-12.

<sup>80</sup> RANDALL-MACIVER, WOOLLEY, *Buhen*, 216. The clappers and snake wand discovered in Birabi tomb C 37 came from different contexts; see CARNARVON, CARTER, *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes*, 85-7, nos. 74, 82, 85.

<sup>81</sup> ZIEGLER, *Catalogue des instruments de musique égyptiens*, 19-21; PINCH, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, 78.



The preferred material for clappers –hippo tusk– no doubt added to their efficacy. Hippos were the most destructive animals known to the Egyptians, who identified the males with Seth and the females with the knife-wielding birth goddess Ipy-Taweret. Perhaps it is significant then that Ipy-Taweret and Seth shared space with Aha-Bes and Beset on amuletic wands, which were, of course, also made of hippo tusk. Ipy-Taweret appeared together with clappers in statuette form in Abydos G62, Lisht 885, and also perhaps in Lisht 555, as well as on amuletic wands in two tombs (Ramesseum 5, Lisht 885). Interestingly, hippo figurines of various materials appear in tombs alongside clappers, twice in Asasif 518, twice in Lisht 885, and one time each in Abydos 498, Lisht 555, Lisht, 752, and Lisht 884. That the faience hippos might represent Seth, who is known to have served the purpose of scaring the womb open and thus facilitating (re)birth, is perhaps suggested by a Nineteenth Dynasty stele depicting Seth as a hippo emerging from the marshes, given that Seth here closely resembles the distinctive mien of the faience figurines.<sup>82</sup>

If the healer embodying Beset might grasp either clappers *or* snakes in her line of work, a scene in the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Bebi at El Kab suggests that amuletic wands served as yet a third interchangeable implement in a practitioner's kit of birth magic. In the tomb of Bebi three nurses (*mn't*) grasped snake wands in one hand and curved tusks in the other, while two others grasped only tusks.<sup>83</sup> The graceful arc of the amuletic wands, however, is echoed in the curved hand-shaped clappers that enjoyed popularity alongside the straight-arm clappers. Significantly, a hand-shaped clapper carved with *s3w*-protectors and discovered in a Late Bronze tomb at Ugarit demonstrates that the formal and ideational similarities between clappers and amuletic wands were recognized in antiquity (Fig. 10).

As has been mentioned, a total of thirteen inscribed and uninscribed ivory wands were discovered in tombs together with clappers. Likewise, I view it as much more than a coincidence that in all but one of the contexts, the amuletic wands and clappers were discovered together with female figurines, suggesting that the powers of each reinforced the others for the same purpose of magically facilitating the rebirth of those interred within the tomb. In addition to the wands, however, clappers were discovered together with some of the very few provenienced freestanding figurines of Aha-Bes, Beset, and Ipy-Taweret. Included among their number, the rampant snake-eating lion –which appeared on three of the amuletic wands found with clappers<sup>84</sup>– was discovered as a figurine a total of four times in three tombs with clappers.<sup>85</sup> As a group, these

<sup>82</sup> LEIBOVITCH, *Eretz-Israel* 6, 1.

<sup>83</sup> ALTENMÜLLER, in ROCCATI, SILIOTTI (eds.), *La magia in Egitto*, 132-3.

<sup>84</sup> The rampant lion is seen on amuletic wands in Ramesseum 5 and on two wands from Lisht 885.

<sup>85</sup> Rampant lion figurines were found in Rameseum 5, Lisht 884, and Lisht 885.

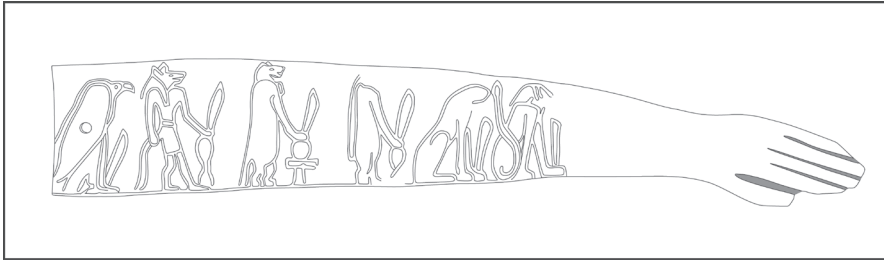


Fig. 10 – Clapper carved with magical protective figures found in tomb 3552 at Ugarit (redrawn from GACHET-BIZOLLON, *Ivoires*, pl. 46, no. 393)

protective entities are known to have made claims such as “We come in order to protect the life and health of So-and-So” or else “to cut off the head of the enemy when he enters the chamber of the children whom the lady So-and-So has born”.<sup>86</sup> One suspects that objects such as clappers, snake wands, amuletic wands, and *s3w*-figurines that had successfully safeguarded numerous births would be deemed especially effective tools for aiding rebirth. Thus, the inclusion among grave goods of used items in an arsenal of birth magic might have less to do with a new movement toward frugality than with an increased recognition of the value of a proven track record.<sup>87</sup>

Simian and dwarf figurines, both found on multiple occasions also in the company of clappers, don’t fit as comfortably into the category of birth magic. Discussing these two types of figurine, however, will allow for a somewhat graceful segue into the essay’s last major point with regard to clappers, namely that, like many of the artifacts found with them, clappers represented a revival and a religious re-envisioning of items unearthed from a deep past. Simians –discovered as figurines twice in Ramesseum 5, twice in Lisht 885, and once in Lisht 466– are occasionally represented on amuletic wands, as is observable on one of the wands in the Ramesseum assemblage. Their presence in this context, however, is perhaps fitting considering that their morning ritual of making a racket at sunrise earned baboons the reputation of solar worshippers. Further, apes and monkeys accompanied the solar Eye Goddess on her propitious journey back from Nubia at the start of the inundation. Here and in other contexts simians participate in scenes involving festivity and joyous sexuality

<sup>86</sup> STEINDORFF, *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 9, 50.

<sup>87</sup> BOURRIAU, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies*, 14-6, has pointed out that solar rebirth was a major theme both in birth magic and in the Coffin Texts. She argues that an increase in the popularity of figurines correlated meaningfully with a decline in the availability of Coffin Texts. She also stated that the trend coincided with a move aimed at decreasing the cost of a good burial.



– and their association with clappers might have to do, then, less with birth magic than with their connotations of fertility, fecundity, and happiness.<sup>88</sup> Even so, their appearance among items more obviously connected with birth magic remains something of a puzzle.

Figurines of dwarfs were discovered alongside clappers in Ramesseum 5, Abydos G62, and Harageh A 37 as well as in two instances in Lisht 884 and three in Lisht 885. Unlike simians, dwarfs do not appear on amuletic wands, despite the fact that in scenes centering upon joy, sexuality, and celebration, dwarfs and apes appear to have been viewed as artistically interchangeable.<sup>89</sup> Considering the connection between *hnr*-troupes and clappers, it is notable that short-statured individuals dance with *hnr*-women on tomb walls<sup>90</sup> and in at least one figurine assemblage.<sup>91</sup> Like *hnr*-women, dwarfs also seem to have been fixtures at Sed-festivals, where they danced for the king in his role as sun god, just as they danced for the god himself.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, according to magical texts the sun god could be envisioned as a great cosmic dwarf, and Khepri –the aspect of the sun most intimately tied to solar rebirth– was often depicted by Egyptian artists with the features of a dwarf.<sup>93</sup> Certainly dwarfs were associated with birth in mortal spheres. In one New Kingdom spell for facilitating childbirth, a dwarf statuette of clay is requested, while in another spell –which was to be recited while holding a dwarf of clay to the brow of a woman in labor– a dwarf is invoked as the messenger of Re, sent to procure an amulet from Hathor.<sup>94</sup> Most of this evidence linking dwarfs to solar rebirth and to birth admittedly postdates the Middle Kingdom; though given that dwarfs decorated offering stands and lamps utilized in household cult at Kahun, it is likely that their efficacy in such matters was perceived earlier.<sup>95</sup> As with figurines of apes, however, their fit with other items associated with birth magic remains somewhat awkward.

<sup>88</sup> DARNELL, *SAK* 22, 74, 79-80, 82-4, 89.

<sup>89</sup> DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 62, 124-5, 133; I am here eliding the categories of dwarf and pygmy, as both types of small person fulfilled similar services as dancers, rejoicing the hearts of Re, Hathor, and other gods.

<sup>90</sup> See KINNEY, *Dance*, 211, 261 for scenes from the tombs of Nu-netjer and Dehni. In the former scene the dwarf dances alongside women who wield boomerang-shaped clappers in one hand and sistra in the other.

<sup>91</sup> In the context of the Twelfth Dynasty tomb of Hepy, four Middle Kingdom *hnr*-figurines were discovered together with the famous movable toy depicting four dancing pygmies (LANSING, HAYES, *BMMA* 29/11, 35-6, figs. 29, 31-3).

<sup>92</sup> DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 146, 149, 268.

<sup>93</sup> *Op. cit.*, 46-7, 156. The suggestion has also been made that figurines of dwarfs carrying quadrupeds over their shoulders, such as that found in Ramesseum 5, depict the dwarf as a defender of the sun god, carrying a calf representing the newborn sun (RAVEN, *OMRO* 67, 12, n. 62).

<sup>94</sup> DASEN, *op. cit.*, 52-3, 140-1.

<sup>95</sup> QUIRKE, *Lahun*, 97.

## CLAPPERS WERE PART AND PARCEL OF AN ARCHAIZING RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

If dwarfs and baboons do not mingle as comfortably in a crowd of *s3w*-protectors as do Aha-Bes, Beset, Ipy-Taweret, and the snake-eating lion, these two categories of figurines are completely at home among the votives depicting a limited repertoire of animals and humans that were cached in ritual deposits at sites such as the Osiris Khenti-amentiu temple at Abydos, the Satet temple at Elephantine, the Horus temple at Hierakonpolis, and the temples at Tell el-Farkha and Tell Ibrahim Awad (Fig. 11-row 1). The tradition of offering figurines of humans and animals at local shrines seems to have begun with the unification of much of the country under the Upper Egyptian rulers in Dynasty Zero, to have flourished during the Early Dynastic period, and to have persisted in a more muted fashion at some sites into the Old Kingdom.<sup>96</sup>

Among these enigmatic but remarkably homogenous assemblages of (primarily) limestone, faience, and ivory figurines, baboons are perhaps the most iconic members.<sup>97</sup> Numerous lines of evidence point to the baboon symbolizing Hedj-wer in this early period – the deity related to the moon and to the cult of royal ancestors, who would later be subsumed into the divine persona of Thoth. Dwarfs too were a stock component of early votive assemblages, although their significance remains unknown.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps, they already represented hypostases of Ptah or Re. Alternatively, they may have been viewed as natural wonders, which would explain the fact that the court seems to have made every effort to co-opt their services in the First Dynasty. Whether those who donated dwarf figurines to a temple viewed them as sacred, as propitious, or even as capable of granting safe births and healthy children, however, is impossible to say.

Dwarfs and baboons were not the only members of the company that clappers kept that possessed parallels in what must have felt like the deep primordial past. Most evident, of course, are the serpopards and the griffins that reappear in Middle Kingdom art after having been absent from Egyptian iconography for over a millennium. These fabulous monsters, which appear on amuletic wands discovered with clappers in Asasif 839, Ramesseum 5, and Lisht 885, are best known from protodynastic ceremonial palettes, two of which

<sup>96</sup> The deposit at Tell el-Farkha dates to the end of Dynasty Zero and the beginning of the First Dynasty (CIALOWICZ, *SAAC* 13, 7). At Tell Ibrahim Awad the temple votives seem to be of Early Dynastic date but to have been sealed by the Third Dynasty or the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty (VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad*, 75). The situation at Hierakonpolis is much less clear, but the Main Deposit is justly famous for its late Protohistoric and Early Dynastic material. Comparable votives may have continued at Elephantine possibly as late as the Fifth Dynasty, but votive figurines were predominantly Early Dynastic (DREYER, *Elephantine VIII*, 59). The situation at Abydos was hopelessly confused by early excavation techniques.

<sup>97</sup> BUSSMANN, in FRIEDMAN, FISKE (eds.), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, 752, table 1; VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad*, 65, fig. 38; 68.

<sup>98</sup> BUSZEC, *SAAC* 12, 38-9, 41-2, 45-55.

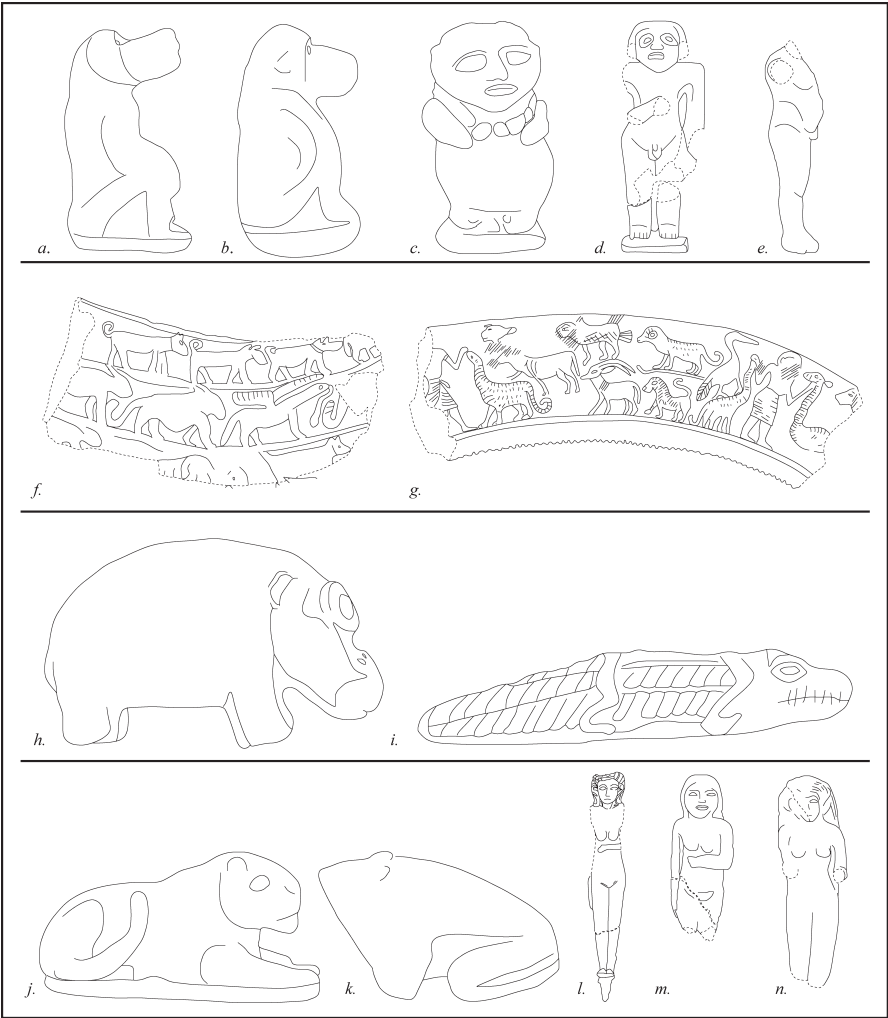


Fig. 11 – Archaic parallels for Middle Kingdom images and figurines

- a. faience baboon from Hierakonpolis, h. 8 cm  
(UC 11004; redrawn from BUSSMANN, *Provinztempel*, 114, H3025);
- b. faience baboon from Tell Ibrahim Awad, h. 8.6 cm  
(redrawn from VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits*, 177, no. 93);
- c. faience dwarf from Hierakonpolis, h. 8 cm  
(ASH E.10; after BUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 104, H3003);
- d. faience squat figure from Elephantine, 10.5 cm  
(after DREYER, *Elephantine*, pl. 11.7);
- e. ivory fat figure from Abydos (compare with the fat ivory  
Ramesseum figure, our fig. 4, row 3), h. 10.9 cm  
(MMA 03.4.14, after BUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 182, A2006);
- f. carved ivory tusk from Hierakonpolis, l. 7 cm  
(UC 14871, after ADAMS, *Hierakonpolis*, pl. 40, no. 327);
- g. carved ivory tusk from Hierakonpolis, l. 15 cm  
(CG 14706; redrawn from BUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 96, H2146);
- h. faience hippo from Tell Ibrahim Awad, l. 13.3 cm  
(redrawn from VAN HAARLEM, *op. cit.*, 180, no. 206);
- i. faience crocodile from Tell Ibrahim Awad, l. 10.9 cm  
(redrawn from VAN HAARLEM, *op. cit.*, 183, no. 257);
- j. ivory lion from Elephantine, l. 6 cm  
(after DREYER, *op. cit.*, pl. 35, no. 190);
- k. serpentine frog from Hierakonpolis, l. 9.2 cm  
(ASH E.203; after BUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 166, H6101);
- l. ivory woman from Hierakonpolis, h. 20.4 cm  
(UC 14860; redrawn from BUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 87, H2053);
- m. ivory woman from Abydos, h. 4.7 cm  
(MMA 04.18.50; after BUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 185, A2013);
- n. ivory woman from Tell Ibrahim Awad, h. 15.3 cm  
(redrawn from VAN HAARLEM, *op. cit.*, 174, no. 3)

–the Narmer palette (JdE 14716) and the Two Dog palette (Ashmolean E.3924 in which the serpopard and the griffin shared space)– were discovered along with baboon and dwarf figurines in the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis.<sup>99</sup> Even more intriguing, however, is their appearance on curved ivory tusks, also excavated from the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis, where, again, in one instance they make their appearance together (Fig. 11-row 2g).

Indeed, ivories such as these make convincing candidates not only for the artistic inspiration behind the reintroduction of griffins and serpopards into the artistic vocabulary of the Middle Kingdom but also for inspiring the production of amuletic wands. Certainly, when one compares the tusks exhumed at Hierakonpolis to those few amuletic wands that were decorated in raised relief, such as the wand (re)inscribed for the Second Intermediate Period king SebKay (JdE 34988) that was excavated at Abydos,<sup>100</sup> the resemblance in form and style is striking. Moreover, the change in subject matter (excluding the monsters!) is only to be expected, as the Egyptians were typically creative in their religious reinventions. Middle Kingdom sacerdotal authorities could easily have exhumed such ivories from a sanctified votive deposit during one of the many temple renovations that occurred at this time. If so, the resuscitation of tusk wands carved with bizarre *Mischwesen* must have had everything to do with the fact that the literal and figurative origin of this magical implement lay at the very foundation of Egypt's religious tradition.<sup>101</sup>

These early votives had likely been obscured from view, and perhaps from consciousness as well, for centuries by the time late Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom rulers initiated concerted programs of temple rebuilding and refurbishment. During the height of the Old Kingdom, pharaohs had been intent on centralizing large-scale religious activity around their own cults, while also lavishing resources on temples belonging to those deities that most directly promoted their religious claim to kingship (especially Re, Hathor, and Ptah). From the Third Dynasty throughout most of the Fifth, then, there is very little evidence, votive or otherwise, for robust activity at provincial shrines. This situation remained largely unchanged until the Sixth Dynasty, when the royal court made the decision, observable in administrative reforms as well, to bolster its presence in the provinces. It was at this time that royally funded construction took place at numerous regional shrines, including Hierakonpolis, Elephantine, and Abydos. Perhaps not coincidentally, as Ulrike Dubiel has noted, in the late

<sup>99</sup> QUIBELL, *Hierakonpolis*, 13, 41, pls. 28-9. For a discussion of the reappearance of monsters in the Middle Kingdom, see FISCHER, in FARKAS *et al.* (eds.), *Monsters and Demons*, 17-8. See also WENGROW, *The Origins of Monsters*, 50-9, for a provocative discussion of the cultural ecology of composite animals in the Protodynastic Period and the Middle Kingdom.

<sup>100</sup> GARSTANG, *Arabah*, pl. 14.

<sup>101</sup> The double-headed bull witnessed on the Hunter's palette (BM EA 20790) and then again on an amuletic wand discovered with clappers in Asasif 839 likely provides a further example.

Old Kingdom many of the amulets interred with the dead in provincial contexts begin to bear a strong resemblance to the Early Dynastic votives excavated at sites such as Koptos, Hierakonpolis, Abydos, Elephantine, and Tell Ibrahim Awad.<sup>102</sup>

During the First Intermediate Period, very little of monumental character was constructed due to a dearth of strong leaders and to unstable conditions. When Mentuhotep II reunified Egypt, however, he initiated a spate of building projects at cultic centers throughout the country, and such activity continued at a relatively steady pace throughout the Twelfth Dynasty. During this period, idiosyncratic local shrines were typically transformed into thick-walled mudbrick buildings of a highly standardized court style –reminiscent of mansions and palaces– that Barry Kemp has termed ‘early formal’. Thus, during the late Old Kingdom and again in the Middle Kingdom rebuilding occurred at virtually all of the above named shrines at which early votives have been found, as well as at a great many others in which these deposits, if they originally existed, are no longer recoverable.<sup>103</sup>

While the figurines of dwarfs and baboons regained spiritual currency at this time, they belonged now to household and mortuary cults rather than to the sphere of temple votives – at least in Egypt proper.<sup>104</sup> The same was true for hippo figurines, which in the Middle Kingdom became famously festooned with marsh designs. Likewise, many other early votive figurines –including couchant lions, crocodiles, and frogs (Fig. 11-rows 3 and 4)– were revived as figurines in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>105</sup> This same suite of animals also settled in alongside serpopards and griffins in the iconography of amuletic wands and amuletic rods, such as those discovered in assemblages together with hand-shaped clappers.

A similar dynamic may well have been at play when it came to the genre of the truncated Middle Kingdom female figurine. As can be seen in Fig. 11, row 4, votives of nude females, which were common in early temple deposits, did possess shins and feet. These figurines were typically made of ivory, however, so by the time they were excavated many had fissured just below the knee. In such a state they bore a strong similarity in shape, if not in material, to their Middle Kingdom counterparts. Just why representations of dancers would lack lower legs and feet has long puzzled those writing on the truncated Middle

<sup>102</sup> DUBIEL, *Amulette, Siegel und Perlen*, 199-219.

<sup>103</sup> KEMP, *Anatomy of a Civilization*, 116-28, 134. Tell el-Farkha is the only site at which a large collection of Early Dynastic votives has been found absent of signs of later temple building. Early Dynastic and Middle Kingdom votive material has also been discovered together in cultic deposits at Saqqara Hill (YOSHIMURA, KAWAI, KASHIWAGI., *MDAIK* 61, 361-402).

<sup>104</sup> Oddly, many such figurines were discovered buried in the procella of the Temple of Obelisks in Byblos (see PINCH, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 79 for references).

<sup>105</sup> See the discussions in VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad*, 57-91; VAN HAARLEM, *Temple Deposits in Early Dynastic Egypt*, 65-98; BUSSMANN, *Provinztempel*.

Kingdom figurines. This artistic choice becomes easily explicable, however, if their shape is seen as an effort to emulate the (broken) votive statuettes recovered from Egypt's earliest temple deposits.

The foregoing discussion serves as a necessary preface to the main point of this section, namely that hand-shaped clappers –like many of the objects that had been out of circulation throughout the height of the Old Kingdom and later reappeared together with clappers as grave-goods– constituted re-inventions of an already ancient artifact. That Early Dynastic clapper forms reappeared in late Old Kingdom iconography is incontrovertible when one compares the gazelle-headed clappers utilized by a *hnr*-troupe in the tomb of Inti at Deshasheh with very similar clappers uncovered in the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis and in tombs at Maadi, Tura, Ezbet el-Walda, and especially in a subsidiary tomb belonging to an elaborate First Dynasty mastaba at Giza (Fig. 12). The gazelle-headed clapper reappears in the tomb at Deshasheh, again as a determinative in a Sixth Dynasty Pyramid Text for the word *dw3t* (translation uncertain),<sup>106</sup> and, fittingly, in the archaizing Sed-festival of Amenhotep III.<sup>107</sup> Such attestations, however, are relatively limited.

One possibility for the origin of the late Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom hand-shaped clappers is that they were inspired by objects like the wood and ivory ‘hands’ that came from First Dynasty contexts at the cemeteries of Umm el Qa’ab and Helwan.<sup>108</sup> Petrie recovered a wooden hand with a flat base (Fig. 12-row 3g) from the tomb of King Djet along with, interestingly enough, “many pieces of wooden wands [...] found carved in the form of shoots of reed or rush”,<sup>109</sup> intriguing artifacts that call to mind the ‘reeds’ held by the boys in Mereruka’s tomb. A similar hand (Fig. 12-row 3h), this time made of ivory, was discovered somewhere between this tomb and that of Djer. Neither of these items closely resemble the later hand-shaped clappers, and this is even more the case for the ivory hand discovered in Helwan tomb 47 H4 (Fig. 12-row 3i), which incorporated a flat rectangular support below the palm. Such a genealogy is not impossible, however, given that Umm el-Qa’ab received renewed cultic attention in the late Old and Middle Kingdoms, especially when the tomb of Djer was identified as the burial place of Osiris. Certainly, the link between First Dynasty clappers and kings fits with the previously discussed royal associations of their Middle Kingdom counterparts.

There is an alternate source of inspiration that is worth exploring, however, especially as the elaborate bracelets so characteristic of Middle Kingdom clappers are absent on the First Dynasty examples. On analogy with the proposed

<sup>106</sup> Pyramid Text 504, line 1083a; HICKMANN, *BIE* 37, 86.

<sup>107</sup> EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *The Tomb of Kheruef*, pls. 24, 45.

<sup>108</sup> ZIEGLER, *Catalogue des instruments de musique égyptiens*, 21; SOURDIVE, *La main dans l'Égypte pharaonique*, 193-5, pl. 38. See the figure list for specific information relating to these objects.

<sup>109</sup> PETRIE, *Royal Tombs*, 37, pl. 36.

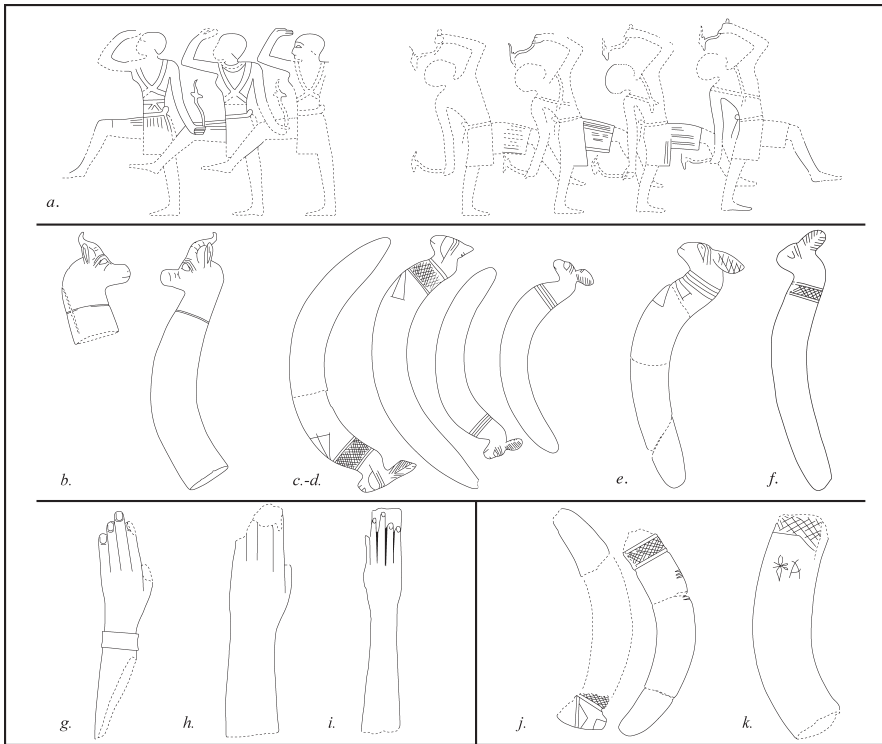


Fig. 12 – Archaic clappers

- a. dancers in the tomb of Inti at Deshasheh (redrawn from PETRIE, *Deshasheh*, pl. 12);
- b. ivory gazelle clappers from a First Dynasty subsidiary tomb at Giza, no meas. (CG 69246; after PETRIE, *Gizeh*, pl. 4);
- c.-d. ivory animal-headed clappers from Tura (CG 69452a-b, h. 25.5; 69451a-b, h. 18.3; after HICKMANN, *Instruments de musique*, pl. 15);
- e. ivory animal-headed clapper from Maadi, h. 18.5 cm (Louvre G 13920; after a photograph stored <<http://antique.mrugala.net/Egypte/Images/index.php?page=3>>, accessed 03.05.2015);
- f. ivory animal-headed clapper from Ezbet el-Walda, h. 20 cm (CG 69460; after HICKMANN, *Instruments de musique*, pl. 14B);
- g. wood hand-shaped clapper (?) from the tomb of Djed, Umm el-Qaab, no meas. (ASH E.1545; redrawn from PETRIE, *Royal Tombs*, pl. 37.19);
- h. ivory hand-shaped clapper (?) from between the tombs of Djed and Djed, h. 12.5 cm (Berlin 15482; redrawn from SOURDIVE, *La main*, 194, pl. 41a);
- i. ivory hand-shaped clapper (?) from Helwan; h. 11.7 cm (JdE 87524; redrawn from SOURDIVE, *op. cit.*, 183, pl. 38a);
- j. ivory animal headed clappers from Hierakonpolis, max h. 12.5 cm (UC 27613; redrawn from BUSSMANN, *Provinztempel*, 103, no. H2196);
- k. ivory clapper labeled for Merneith, Umm el-Qaab, h. 10.2 cm (CG 69245; after HICKMANN, *Instruments de musique*, pl. 11)



connection between broken votive female figurines and the ‘truncated’ women of the Middle Kingdom, I prefer to see hand-shaped clappers as instead inspired by the broken state of animal-headed clappers – the banded and hatched collars of which are of the same design as the bracelets on late Old and Middle Kingdom hand-shaped clappers. The animal heads of a pair of clappers discovered in the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis (Fig. 12-row 3j), for example, both snapped off at fissure points, just above the banded and hatched bracelet. As is apparent from the drawing, the resemblance of the decapitated animal-headed clapper to the forearm and bracelet of a later hand-shaped clapper is startling. One can certainly imagine a religious official finding a clapper in such a state and mistaking it for (or re-envisioning it as) a forearm. The same effect may be observed in a broken clapper inscribed for Queen Merneith that Petrie uncovered among material associated with the burial complex of King Djer<sup>110</sup> (Fig. 12-row 3k). This decapitated clapper, in addition to resembling a curved arm and bracelet, anticipates the clappers inscribed for royal women that appear in the archaeological record from the Second Intermediate Period on.

Whether early clappers were inspired by the hand-shaped clappers originally interred in royal and elite tombs of the First Dynasty or, alternatively, the broken versions of animal-headed clappers found in the vicinity of the tombs of First Dynasty kings and their retainers<sup>111</sup> as well as in ritual deposits associated with Egypt’s earliest temples is to some extent moot. In either case the exhumed artifacts would surely have been associated with hallowed antiquity, with kings, and with the gods. Robust religious beliefs and traditions, like those operative for millennia in ancient Egypt, however, are never static. Thus, the hippo tusk clappers were not only resuscitated but also re-invented to suit the emergent, broad-based interest in the cults of Hathor and Re, as well as the potent and mysterious world of birth magic. When employed in houses and settlements, this new genre of clappers helped ensure that children survived childbirth, passed successfully through all their life-stages, and celebrated the gods in festival settings. In temples, clappers sounded to celebrate kings, gods, and rites of renewal. And in tombs, together with the help of other highly charged grave-goods and figurines, clappers ensured that the souls of the dead would be reborn and revitalized, thanks in part to the ministrations of snake-wielding, lion-headed entities and to the rhythmic claps of Hathoric dancers.

<sup>110</sup> For contextual information, see PETRIE, *Royal Tombs*, 22, pl. 5.

<sup>111</sup> A pair of ram-headed clappers, not yet mentioned, was discovered in a First Dynasty retainer’s tomb at Abydos (CG 69250).

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